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EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 538. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 22ND, 1899. [ONE PENNY.

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A TRAMP'S ROMANCE.

"EXCUSE me, miss, are you hurt?"

"No, sir, thank you."

The first speaker was a young man twenty-three years of age, and he was about the most sorrowful, tramp-looking person that could be found in a month's journey.

He was tall and rather thin, with dark hair, somewhat long, and a scrubby beard and moustache, while his eyes had such a mournful expression that you could easily see he had known much hardship and misfortune. Yet, in spite of this fact you would have to laugh at his general appearance, for he was dressed in the remnants of what had once been a blue linen suit, and had on a pair of shoes of which very little was left but the uppers, and these, together with a straw hat that had only half a brim, constituted his attire.

Yet, notwithstanding the fact that this young man, to all outward appearances, seemed to be a regular tramp, you could readily learn from his manner of speech and gentlemanly bearing that he had seen better days.

The person whom the tramp addressed was a pretty girl of twenty, the only child of James Miller, the proprietor of a large boatbuilding establishment.

Ever since her mother's death, two years and a half ago, it had been the custom of Evelyn to visit her mother's grave two or three times a week, and it was while returning from one of these visits, and while driving along the road leading to her home, that the horses became frightened at a cyclist, who passed in front of them, just as they reached a cross road, and became so uncontrollable that Evelyn could do nothing but let them dash down the road, and hope that someone would see her predicament and manage to stop them before they brought themselves and her to grief.

On the horses dashed for more than half a mile, throwing such a cloud of dust that it was impossible for Evelyn to see anything in front of them, and it was not surprising that she should have given utterance to a scream, when, with a severe shock, the carriage came to a halt, throwing her from the seat, through the air, and into the arms of a tramp who seemed to have been waiting there, so as to be able to catch her before she reached the ground.

As the tramp caught Evelyn he gave utterance to the above question, and upon learning that she was not hurt he said:

"Your carriage is very badly damaged, miss, and is of no use to you in its present shape, so, if you will allow me, I will go back to town for help."

"No, thank you," said Evelyn, "that is unnecessary; it is not far to my home, and I can easily walk."

"But the horses and carriage, what's to be done with them?" asked the tramp.

"I will send someone for them," replied Evelyn, "and I must ask you to come up to our house to see my father. He will wish to thank you for your kindness and bravery in saving me from what would, perhaps, have been a very serious accident had the horses been allowed to go on."

"Excuse me, miss, I shall have to refuse your request," said the man. "I think myself amply repaid for the little assistance I gave you, by receiving your thanks alone."

"Can nothing induce you to come and see my father?" asked Evelyn.

"No, miss," replied the tramp, "I do not wish any further thanks; but if you wish to show me more kindness you may tell me whom I have had the honour of assisting."

"Why, certainly," said Evelyn, "here is my card, and now I must be going. Will you please stay here until I send someone to get the horses and carriage?"

"Certainly, miss," said Jim (for that was his name), as he took the card she handed him.

After again thanking him Evelyn started down the road, leaving the tramp standing near the broken carriage, watching her as she went, until a bend in the road hid her from view.

For a long time after Evelyn had gone Jim stood in the same place and appeared in deep thought; so occupied was he that he did not notice an old woman who came up the road until within about four feet of him, where she stopped to pick up something, which she immediately put into her pocket, as though she were afraid to let anyone see what it was.

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After first assuring herself that the tramp had not seen what she had done, the old woman stood in the road looking at Jim long and critically. At last she came a step nearer, breaking the train of the tramp's thoughts with a harsh laugh.

"Well, what's come over you, old woman?" asked Jim, very much amused at the queer appearance she presented in her present attitude.

"Ha, ha, fine looking girl, isn't she?" said the old woman, entirely ignoring Jim's question.

"Yes," replied Jim mechanically.

"Met with an accident, didn't she?" was the old woman's next question.

"Can't you see she did?" returned Jim.

"Yes, I can see," said the old woman; "but I should like to have the details. Was she hurt?"

"Not a bit," returned Jim, getting somewhat tired of the old woman's inquiries.

"Not hurt?" repeated the old woman in a surprised tone; "well, strange things happen sometimes. How did the accident happen?"

"Look here, old woman," said Jim; "what makes you so inquisitive? Do you know this young girl, or do you just want to know all about this accident out of curiosity?"

"Well," replied the woman with a laugh, "I can't say that we are strangers, as it happened that the girl's father and I were neighbours when children, and we were educated in the same school, and in later years, when my parents became poor, I secured a place in the family of the girl's aunt as a nurse to her only child, who was sickly and required a great deal of attention; so you see I not only know the girl and her father, but I know the rest of the family as well."

"That being the case," returned Jim, "I don't mind telling you the details, so far as I know. I was—"

"You don't know all about it, then?" interrupted the old woman.

"No," replied Jim. "All I know is that I was sitting under this tree, taking a rest, when I heard a noise on the road towards the lake, and when I looked in that direction I saw a runaway pair of horses coming; but I could not see if there was anyone in the carriage or not on account of the dust. Yet I determined to stop the horses, just the same, and I did so, forcing them to run into this tree; and, as fate would have things, the young girl, who proved to be in the carriage, was thrown in my direction, so that I had no difficulty in saving her from a fall."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the old woman, again breaking into that loud laugh of hers.

"What's the matter now?" asked Jim.

"Beauty in distress; tramp to the rescue," replied the old woman, laughing between each clause.

"Isn't that romantic enough to please any girl?" asked Jim, also laughing.

"Not in this case," said the old woman, "Miss Evelyn Miller would have preferred it to have been a handsome young man instead."

At the mention of the name of Evelyn Miller, Jim was surprised, and looked quickly at the card he still had in his hand, and after gazing at it for some time he said:

"You say you know all about these Millers; will you please tell me something about the family? It seems to me as if I have heard the name of Evelyn Miller before. What is her father's first name?"

"James," replied the old woman, looking at the tramp in a surprised way.

"James," repeated Jim, thinking deeply. "Yes, I have heard that name also, but I cannot at present remember where or when."

"Perhaps you heard it in the town," said the old woman.

"No," replied Jim, "it is longer back than that. Won't you tell me something about these people?"

"Yes, I will tell you all you want to know," said the old woman, "but not here, for here comes the town blacksmith, and I must be going. Come to my house, on the road near the lake, any time you wish."

"Whereabouts on the road near the lake?" asked Jim.

"Oh, anyone will tell you where Old Hannah lives," replied the old woman. "Good-day."

"Good-day," returned Jim, as he watched the old woman disappear.

A few minutes after Old Hannah left the vicinity the blacksmith came up and took charge of the wrecked carriage, and as there was no further need for Jim's help, he left that place, going in the direction of the sawmill, where he intended seeking work.

Upon reaching it he inquired for the foreman, and making his wants known was immediately employed as one of the yard hands.

When Mr. Miller returned home in the evening of the day of the accident, he found Evelyn on the lounge in the library prostrated with convulsive weeping, and he went over to her and attempted to ascertain the cause. For a long time he was unsuccessful, but at last Evelyn managed to check the flow of tears long enough to say:

"Father, you no doubt have heard of the accident that happened to me this morning, and of my being rescued by a tramp?"

"Yes, my child. I have heard all about it from Johnston, the foreman of the mill. Old Hannah told him, and she also said that you were not hurt. Is that true?"

"Yes, that's the truth; I am not hurt, thanks to that tramp; but a far greater misfortune has befallen me than getting hurt," said Evelyn.

"Why, what has happened?" quickly asked Mr. Miller in surprise.

"I lost my locket, in which there were mother's and Alvin's photographs," replied Evelyn between sobs.

"Well, my child, that is a great loss to you; but how do you know that it cannot be found?" said Mr. Miller.

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"I don't think it will ever be found again," returned Evelyn.

"I will have a search made, anyhow," said Mr. Miller, "and I will have it done early to-morrow morning, as it is now too dark to see anything very plainly."

So the next morning a very energetic search was instituted, but without success, and although Mr. Miller offered a large reward for the return of the locket, which was Evelyn's most valued possession, it could not be found.

On the Sunday following the day of the search for Evelyn's locket, Old Hannah was sitting near the door of her old house, thinking deeply, while in her hand she held a golden locket of old-fashioned design, and if anyone had stolen up behind her and looked over her shoulder they would have seen that the locket was open, and that it contained the photographs of two persons, one of a beautiful woman of about thirty years of age, and the other that of a handsome young man, who did not appear to be over twenty years old; and it was this latter picture that caused the sad expression that overspread Old Hannah's face while she sat looking at the handsome face exposed to her view.

How long the old woman would have remained in that position it is hard to say, had not Jim come along and stopped in the doorway, shutting out the fast-fading light, and thereby causing Hannah to look up and exclaim:

"So you have come, have you? Well, I half expected you would some time. I know you are anxious to hear that story about the Millers."

"Yes," replied Jim, "I came to hear that story."

"Well, come in and sit down, and I'll not disappoint you," said Hannah.

After Jim had sat down and Hannah had also taken a seat near him, she said:

"I'll begin with the time when James Miller was a young man, and in telling you their history I must also tell you a part of mine, for I was mixed up in their family for a long time.

"When James Miller was young he was a very swell young man, and as he was fond of girls' society, he had a great many admirers among the young ladies of the neighbourhood.

"James and I were brought up together, and as he always treated me kindly and went with me a good deal, I was very fond of him. He often declared that he loved me and could not live without me; so, when one day he asked me to become his wife, I consented, and we were engaged.

"The wedding was to have taken place in about eight months, but when five months had passed he happened to meet another girl, who was known as a perfect beauty; and he was so captivated by her charms of loveliness that after seeing her two or three times he had neither eyes nor heart for anyone else but her.

"So, in consequence, I was forgotten, the engagement broken, and shortly after having met they were married. But they did not live a very happy life, and this was said to have been owing to the fact that Mr. Miller was not as rich as people first believed he was.

"Mr. and Mrs. Miller had two children. The first was a girl, and she died shortly after birth; while the second was also a girl. She looks very much like her mother, but has a better disposition; and, as I always hated her mother, I hate her, too, for the reason that she bears that resemblance to her mother.

"About two years before Evelyn's birth my father lost all his money through speculating, and I had to look for something to do. Luckily, I secured a position in the home of Mrs. Livingston, who was a sister to Mr. Miller, as a nurse to her only child, a boy, who was a year old, and who had contracted a kind of spinal disease from falling off a chair.

"The child was dangerously ill and required constant attention, and although he had the best medical assistance obtainable, it was about three years before he was well enough to get about alone.

"Even then the doctors said that, from the fall, the brain was still weak and that it was liable to remain so for a long while. They also said that if the boy should suffer any severe shock, he would be liable to have brain fever, for in its weak state the brain was very susceptible to that disease."

Here the old woman stopped to light a lamp, for it was now quite dark. When she had again seated herself, she said:

"Of course, there was no further need for my services after Alvin, which was the boy's name, was able to go about by himself, so I left there, and as I could not secure anything else to do here, I went to Glasgow, and there became a nurse in one of the hospitals.

"I stayed there about sixteen years, and during that time I heard little of what was going on in my native place. I don't think I should have returned then, had not my father died, and I stopped here.

"When everything was again straight, and I had settled down to life in this small house, I learnt that Mr. Livingston had died during my absence, and that Alvin, then a young man of twenty years was engaged to his cousin, Evelyn, who had just passed her seventeenth birthday.

"They were to be married when he was twenty-one, but Providence willed otherwise, for about three months after my return to my old home, Alvin, together with two friends, went on a sailing excursion, and they were caught in a storm and the boat upset.

"All three of the occupants must have been drowned; at least two were, for their bodies were found in different places. They were the two young men that were with Alvin, and strange to say, Alvin was never heard of, nor was his body ever found, although search was made for it for a long time.

"About a year after Alvin's death or disappearance, Mrs. Livingston died of grief for her lost son, and as there was no nearer relative, Mr. Miller inherited her fortune; but in her will, Mrs. Livingston stated that if in the course of the next five years her son should be found, all her possessions were to be given him, except a certain sum of money, I forget how much, which was to

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be retained by James Miller; but no one thinks Alvin will ever return now, after three years of absence, so I suppose James Miller can keep the money."

During the recital of the Miller family history, Jim listened very attentively, and when the name of Livingston was mentioned he looked puzzled, but as the old woman went on with the story his face became clearer, until at last he seemed to remember some things that she spoke of, especially the part about the boat's being lost. When she mentioned that accident the tramp shook as if with an ague, but the old woman did not notice it, being too interested in what she was saying to notice anything. At last, when she had finished her story, Jim said:

"Miss Hannah, I thank you very much for your trouble in relating the Miller and Livingston family histories so minutely. I now can remember things that happened years ago; your story has given me back my memory, and if you wish I will tell you a story of a young man which, I think, is a sort of sequel to the one you have just related."

To say that Hannah was surprised at this speech would be putting it mildly. She was speechless with amazement, and when she regained control of her powers of speech she said:

"One minute; I wish to ask you a few questions before I hear your story."

"All right," said Jim; "I will answer them as best I can."

"Then," said Hannah, "tell me what you mean by saying that my story has given you back your memory; and I also wish to know how any story you can tell can be a sequel to mine."

"Well," replied Jim, "I can answer both your questions by telling you my story.

"Well," began Jim, "we are in June now, and it was on June 15th, three years ago, that my story begins. On that day, three young men, one who resided in this place, and two others, determined to go on a sailing and fishing excursion. So they hired a small sailing-boat and started out, intending to return the same day.

"Everything went well until they were about opposite Pentwater, when the wind began blowing a gale, and before they had gone very far a storm broke upon them with all the fury possible. The boat was upset, and only one reached the shore."

"The one who reached shore was certainly Alvin Livingstone," said the old woman, interrupting the tramp.

"Yes," answered Jim, "he was Alvin Livingston, but I did not know it until I heard your story."

"Now go on with your story," said Hannah; "what became of him?"

"When he reached the shore," continued Jim, "he was so weak and exhausted that he had to lay down and rest some hours before he could go further; but, strange to say, he had completely lost his memory, remembering nothing of what had happened, nor yet anything whatever of his past life, not even his own name, nor did he have anything about him by which he could be identified, the only thing he had with him being a gold watch and chain; but as the watch did not have his name anywhere, it could not help in identifying him.

"So in this state he wandered through the woods along the shore until he presently came to a small hut situated in the centre of a dense part of the forest.

"In the hut lived an old man who was somewhat of a hermit, who appeared to have some knowledge of medicine, for no sooner did he see the young man who approached the hut than he saw what was the matter with him, and he determined to nurse him back to health and strength, which he did during the two years and a half that followed.

"Although the young man was perfectly healthy in mind and body, he could never remember anything that had happened before the day when he was pronounced cured of mind and bodily weakness by the old man, who told him that he would never be able to remember his past life unless someone would tell him something about it which would appeal to his sympathy and cause him to think very hard of the past.

"About six months ago the old man died, and the young man left the vicinity of the hut and has been going from place to place ever since, trying to find some clue that would lead to his identity."

"How did you come to know him? Where is he now?" asked the old woman, excitedly.

"I know him because we tramped together," answered Jim. "As to where he is now, I will not say, but if you wish, I will bring him here to-morrow—that is, if you agree to two conditions."

"What are the conditions?" asked Hannah.

"The first," answered Jim, "is that you return to Miss Evelyn that locket which I saw you looking at when I came, and which I know belongs to her."

"And the second?" asked Hannah, in a somewhat angry tone.

"The second," replied the tramp, "is that you ask Miss Evelyn to come here to receive the locket at two o'clock to-morrow afternoon; and if you do so, Alvin will come here also."

"Well," said Hannah, "as I will see Alvin myself soon now, I will not need the picture in the locket, so I will consent to give it back."

"That is right," said Jim.

After spending a restless night Jim got up early the next morning and, after leaving a note to be sent to Johnston, saying that he would not be at the mill that day, he started for the next town, where he arrived about seven o'clock, and at once went to a pawnbroker, where he pawned a gold watch and chain. With some of the proceeds of this transaction, he went into a barber's shop, where he had his hair and beard taken off. This altered his appearance so that no one could recognise him, except by his clothes, which he also discarded for a new outfit, purchased at a shop near the barber's shop. After these changes were made, he looked respectable and defied anyone to recognise in him the tramp, Jim; but he did not go about the town, for fear some of his old friends would recognise him, but, instead, he walked slowly out into the country in the direction of the town from which he came that morning, and he so timed himself that he arrived in the vicinity of old Hannah's home just a little before two o'clock, and he only had time to enter the house and explain to Hannah that Jim and Alvin were the same person before they heard a carriage stop before the door and Evelyn alighted.

When Evelyn reached the house, she was met by Hannah, who welcomed her and invited her inside, and, after they were seated, Hannah drew from her pocket the lost locket and handed it to Evelyn, saying:

"Here, my child, is your locket, which was given me to give to you."

Upon receiving the locket, Evelyn immediately opened it, and, after looking at both pictures, said:

"Miss Hannah, you do not know how I have missed this locket during the short time it was lost, and I most sincerely thank you for being the cause of its return."

"How did you miss it?" asked Hannah. "Haven't you another locket?"

"Yes," answered Evelyn, "I have another locket, but it was the pictures that I missed, for I always look at them often during the day."

"Have you no other pictures of the same person that you have in that locket?" asked Hannah.

"Of mother I have several; but this is the only photo Alvin ever had taken, and I value it so highly that I was completely distracted at its loss."

"How would you like to see Alvin again, alive and well?" asked Hannah.

"I would be very happy if I could see him again," replied Evelyn. "But, alas! he is now dead long ago, I am sure, or he would have returned before this."

"Do not be too sure," said Hannah. "I am positive that he will turn up again, and that time is not far off either."

"What do you mean?" cried Evelyn, noticing the convinced look on her face.

"Oh, nothing; only that he is not far off and will soon be here," said Hannah, looking over Evelyn's shoulder towards the door, where a form appeared.

At that moment someone behind her said:

"Evelyn, dearest, do you know me?"

Evelyn was on her feet in an instant, and, turning round, she looked at the speaker for a moment, then crying, "Alvin, Alvin, can it really be you?" she sprang forward and fell into his arms.

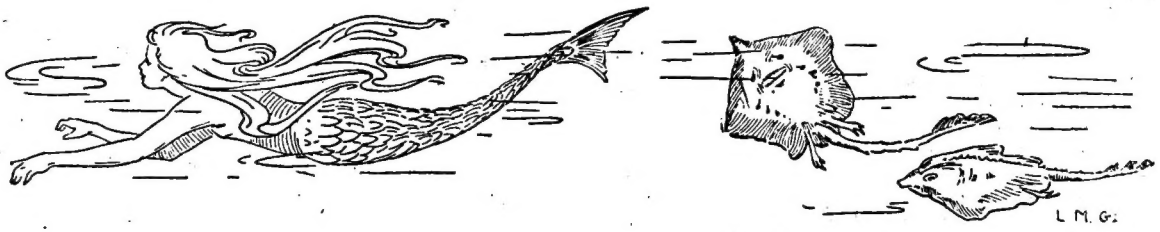
That night there was a family council in the parlour of the Miller residence, at which were present Mr. Miller, Evelyn, Alvin, Hannah, and Mr. Lawson, the family lawyer. Mr. Miller had called these persons together for the purpose of straightening out the family affairs immediately. He did not believe in delay, and wished to turn over to Alvin what was coming to him that very night, so that no one would suffer any inconvenience or unnecessary delay.

When everything had been straightened out to the satisfaction of all, Alvin rose, and addressing Mr. Miller, said.

"Uncle, you of course remember that Evelyn and I were engaged before that accident happened to me, and are still for the matter of that; but we have decided to take no more chances, and we wish you to live with us and share our happiness; will you?"

"I certainly will," replied Mr. Miller, "and I propose that Hannah be our housekeeper."

Mabel Maru.



A DREAM OF THE FINAL CATASTROPHE.

I stood on a high cliff. Twenty feet in front of me a perpendicular wall of rock went down, down, till it seemed one would have to look twice to see the bottom, where the waters of the harbour splashed against the boulders.

To-day the bay was as smooth as polished glass, save where the vessels coming in from the sea through the strait opposite the point where I stood left a ripple and a line of foam behind, like a flaw in the crystal.

The great city lay to the left of the strait. The burning midsummer sun, shining from a cloudless sky, was reflected by a hundred thousand chimneys and roof-tops; and the images of the high buildings and the myriad of vessels anchored in the harbour made the scene more like a mirage than reality.

So far above the city was my point of observation that not a sound, not even a murmur of the bustle and noise attendant upon its activity, reached my ears, though through the clear atmosphere I could distinguish moving objects, as in a camera obscura.

From the bay, too, although many vessels—huge ocean steamers, ferry boats, and yachts—were moving about, I heard only one sound: the interminable "puff-puff-puff" of a little tug-boat, which rapidly threaded its way among the other craft. So monotonous, indeed did this sound become, that I turned my eyes from the water and looked round at nearer objects.

To my right was a grove of oaks. In a clear space in the midst of the trees stood a white building, its gable towards me, which reminded me at first glance of nothing so much as the Parthenon as it used to be represented in the classical dictionary.

I had not noticed this building before, and as I stood and wondered, a troop of gaily-dressed young people came rushing out of the door and arranged themselves in groups on the mossy circles surrounding the trees.

At this moment my companion, who had lagged behind me, came up, and together we went towards the gay throng. Our approach seemed unnoticed.

Scarcely had we joined the group, when, raising my eyes, I saw to right and left dark thunder-clouds rolling rapidly towards the zenith. Broad flashes of lightning played about the horizon, while in sharper, zigzag

streaks the electric spark cut its path through the azure directly above our heads.

From the right, low mutterings of distant thunder were heard, and a chilling wind, rising suddenly, moaned among the pines in the distance, and rustled the leaves of the lindens under which we sat.

I glanced towards the building, and on the steps of the door which looked out upon the city there stood an old man, wrinkled and bent.

A faded dressing gown was corded about his waist, his feet were encased in embroidered slippers, and his right hand, which bore a long oaken staff, gnarled and twisted, trembled as the fierce blast struck him and tossed his thin grey locks.

In a shrill voice he cried:

"Come in! Come in! We are going to have a terrible storm."

Even as he spoke, and as if in corroboration of his words, the force of the wind increased almost to a gale, and the large drops of rain began to fall, slowly and gently at first, but with increasing vigour, till the patter on the leaves was lost in one long-drawn sound, almost a roar, as the wind drove the water through the trees.

Meanwhile the rest of the party had sought shelter in the building, but as I stepped forward to follow them my eyes rested on a sight which compelled me involuntarily to pause.

Ahead of me, beyond the bay, beyond the city, beyond even the waters of the ocean itself, a veil or shutter of more than inky blackness rose perpendicularly from the horizon. Up to the very heavens it seemed to stretch, and to both sides as far as the eye could reach. A sudden undefinable fear came over me, and held me rooted to the earth. My horror increased as I saw that this horrible veil was moving towards me, how rapidly I could not guess; but it seemed to cover the thousand miles between the horizon and the straits in barely an iota of time.

As it drew nearer to me I saw that it had also another motion, like that of a band-saw or an endless chain, as if a huge jack-towel of flexible blackness had been swung over two rollers on the nethermost bounds of the universe, and rapidly revolving, was eating its way deep into the very bowels of the earth; for as this horrible engine of destruction approached I perceived that it was cutting away the sea and the solid land, leaving a smooth, clean-cut edge, where these before had been.

"It will stop," thought I, "before it reaches the city."

But no; the dreadful Thing, like an insatiate monster, never paused or swerved for an instant, and a chill shock coursed through my veins as I watched first the points of land on either side of the strait, then the farthermost houses of the city, and then nearer objects fade into absolute nothingness.

The huge machine kept steadily pressing forward.

As street after street of the city melted away, the Thing approached nearer and nearer the waters of the harbour. Tall spires fell, and mighty buildings were swallowed up, but, until touched by the Thing itself, the remainder of the city was as firm and unchanged as ever.

The cries of the dying reached my ears at intervals, but so far distant was I that the noise sounded more like the squeak of a dying mouse than as if it came from the throats of a multitude of human beings.

Now the bay began to melt away. Ship after ship a moment ago riding peacefully at anchor, was swallowed up, and left not even a ripple, for the water and the bottom of the sea were likewise annihilated.

And now, above the ever-increasing roar of the vast black body, I heard again the "puff-puff-puff" of the little steam-tug, and as I looked I saw it coming at full speed directly toward the precipice on which I stood. In an instant the Thing had overtaken it, and as it disappeared, with one last hopeless scream from its whistle, like the despairing wail of a lost soul, there flashed over me the meaning of this awful catastrophe that I had been witnessing. It was the end of the world!

By a mighty effort I threw myself forward, clutching as I fell at a tuft of bunch-grass. Barely had I time to gasp out "Heaven, help me!" when the awful Thing, cutting through the cliff, as if it were paper, was upon me.

The earth beneath me gave way, and I plunged headlong down, down, into the blackest of darkness, and then all was silent and blank for a space.

* * * * *

A drop of rain on my face aroused me. I lay in the soft grass in the middle of a level meadow that extended on all sides as far as I could see. The setting sun was firing the western skies, and a few small rain-clouds scudded before the breeze. Hither she came and found me, and together we returned home.

Geo. Hyne.

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THE TAMING OF THE BEAR.

THE STRANGE PASSENGER ON THE ENGINE.

It was blistering—murderously hot—in Queensland, and I was in my ugliest humour. When I stepped up in the tender, after oiling, there sat a woman in the fireman's seat.

Strange how some women are always poking into places where they have no business. Where did she come from, I wondered. I was obliged to acknowledge that she was fair to look upon, but in my present mood I didn't want her there.

On the railway we become accustomed to the chronometer-like regularity of our work, and dislike to have it disturbed.

The slightest change, be it ever so trivial, in the monotonous repetition of our daily routine, irritates, and throws us out of balance for the entire journey.

On the last trip a set-screw had dropped out of the go-ahead eccentric on the left side. I reported it, and when I asked Saunders, the foreman, why he hadn't put one in, he answered, very cavalierly, that there was no need of it; one would hold as good as a dozen, if the eccentric was keyed on, and besides, he had no time. He added superciliously:

"If you fellers would get under your engines once in a while with a wrench, you wouldn't be dropping nuts and bolts and set-screws all over the line."

That was the rasp I got for a starter. Then my fireman failed to show up, and Saunders sent me the one extra man that he knew I particularly disliked to have work for me.

He was a great, gawky, ignorant, red-headed know-it-all, who satisfied himself, before he had been three months at the business, that he was the smartest man on the line.

He would contradict and argue with anybody from the master-mechanic down, or up, either.

When told to do a thing, he never failed to offer a suggestion as to how it should be done, and would enter into a long explanation as to why his way was superior to yours.

When you got angry, and peremptorily ordered him to do as he was told, he would reply, with a deprecatory smirk, as of one who submitted under protest:

"Oh, of course, if you say so, I'll do it your way; you're the boss."

I had crawled under her and replaced the set-screw myself. I was dirty, drenched with perspiration, and thoroughly exasperated with myself, Saunders, the fireman, and everybody else. And now, here was that woman, looking as calm and as sweetly content as though life were one long summer holiday, as no doubt it was in her case. Where was the fireman? No doubt he had invited her to ride; his assurance was equal to it. But I'd soon get rid of her!

"I'm going to ride with you, engine-driver," said she, with a pleasant smile.

"You'll have to get a pass to ride on the engine," I replied, wiping the oil-can industriously in order to avoid meeting the gaze of those all-conquering eyes of hers.

"I have a pass," she answered quietly.

"Let me see it, please," I said.

She handed me the bit of cardboard, which I wilfully disfigured with greasy fingermarks as I read to my discomfiture an order to drivers and guards to allow the bearer to ride on all trains and engines—signed by the General Manager.

"Is that all right?" she asked in, I thought, a rather flippant tone.

"Yes," said I; "you can ride."

The fireman returned with a piece of ice. He looked surprised; he blushed and bowed. She returned his salute with well-bred ease. They were strangers. I was conscious of a feeling of relief. He fixed up the cooler, and offered her a drink with the air of a Chevalier Bayard (who would have dreamed of him as a lady-killer!)

She drank from our battered and rusty tin cup as though it had been a silver flagon. He struck up a conversation with her at once. Though disdaining to listen, I overheard enough to learn that he was dilating on his own importance and the perils to which his calling subjected him. She was taking it all in and tickling his self-conceit with exclamations of surprise and admiration.

It was disgusting! They were giggling and snickering, and enjoying themselves over there exactly like a couple of fools.

"You'd better bank up your fire," said I.

"Oh, that's all right, Joe," he replied, with a nonchalant gesture; "my fire is well up; I can get it up after you pull out."

"Never mind about me pullin' out; hook up your fire now, an' put on the blower an' let 'er warm up a bit; I want some steam."

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"All right, Joe, just as you say," he replied with an air of condescension that made me feel like wringing his neck. But instead of going at it, he commenced to explain to the passenger what he was going to do.

She seemed greatly interested. Before he had finished the guard gave me a signal. I blew the whistle, and slipped her so that his fire was pretty well made up before he could get the door open. For the next half hour I kept him so busy baling coal into her that he didn't have much time to talk to anybody. About as fast as he threw it into the firebox I threw it out of the stack.

He placed her so that she could get air without being blown off the seat.

She thanked him so graciously that I hated him even worse than ever.

Every time the steam went down a pound I growled at him, but his good nature, like hers, was invincible. Whenever I ventured to steal a glance I found her looking straight at me, which was disconcerting. I tried to scare her by wheeling furiously over rough places and down steep grades, but she didn't appear to notice it.

About every month, on a railway, petty grievances accumulate, until the hotheads demand that a committee be sent to headquarters, and commence to talk strike. We were passing through one of these crises, and I was chairman of the committee.

We had already called on the General Manager twice, and were to go again in a day or two. Things were approaching fever heat on the line, and, as I rode along my mind was about equally occupied with thoughts pertaining to the committee business and wondering who my passenger was.

Suddenly, like a ray of sunlight breaking through a dark cloud, the whole thing became clear to me. She was the company's spy, and she was pumping that fool of a fireman to her heart's content.

When I got down to oil at the water-plug, I told him to bring me the oil-can. I got him round in front of the engine, told him my suspicions, and advised him to keep a watch on that tongue of his. He waved my suspicions aside, in his usual airy manner, and hinted that I was jealous.

When I got back on the engine she was sitting on the box on my side. "Have you any objection to my riding on this side a little way? I am curious to see how you make it go," she asked, in a pretty coaxing way.

"No," I replied, with forced ungraciousness, "you have a right to ride wherever you please."

I knew I was acting like a bear, and was ashamed of it. I asked her awkwardly to excuse my back, and was not pleased by the profusion of her assurances that she didn't mind. I wished I had a clean suit of over-clothes on. I was conscious of a great, black streak of grease on my back. I hadn't been shaved for three days, and I had caught a piece of grit in my right eye, inflaming it until I knew it loomed up like a tail-light in a tunnel.

And the fireman was one of those unaccountable fellows to whom dirt never sticks.

I usually passed the goods train in the siding at Dalton. But this time I was to pass her at Knowlton.

My passenger and the fireman had commenced again where they left off. In pretended solicitude for her comfort, I ill-naturedly closed my front window tight, and roasted her out.

I kept my head doggedly turned and pretended not to know when the fireman assisted her back to his side, where she could ride in comfort.

When I came in sight of Knowlton siding, the goods train's flagman signalled me to come ahead. She had gone in there to let me by. There was but one short siding at Knowlton, which could be entered by a switch at either end.

As there were some trucks in the near end, the goods ran ahead and backed in, pushing the others back far enough to get in clear herself.

I noticed that the truck at my end of the switch was loaded with lumber. I pulled my head in, and tried the gauge-cocks.

I remember hearing a crash, and a snapping of breaking wood, and then I woke on the floor of the guard's van, and looked up into the hazel eyes of my passenger. There was a look of intense pity in them, as she bathed my head, face and neck in cool water. As the car heeled, in rounding a curve, Bill Ditmar, the conductor came up to me.

That seemed to recall me to my senses, and I tried to get up, but my passenger pushed me gently back, talking soothingly.

"Lay still, old man; be quiet," said Bill; "you're all right. Don't try to move."

"What's the matter?" I asked querulously. "What ye doin'? Who slopped this water all over me?"

"Don't you know you're hurt, Joe?"

"Hurt? No. Who hurt me?"

"There was a two-inched spruce plank stickin' out o' a truck o' timber in Knowlton siding; it stripped your side o' the truck off, an' knocked ye off yer perch. The corner o' the sack broke it off, an' it scraped along the whole side o' the train."

"Is that so? Who's runnin' the engine now?"

"The fireman."

"Well, I can't stay here; I must get back on the engine 'fore that red-headed chump——" I tried again to get up, but when I raised my head it became dizzy, things looked black, and it fell wearily back on the pile of old coats.

I awoke in a hospital, where I stayed a month. When I came out the threatened trouble on the line had been settled more or less satisfactorily; my fireman had been promoted, and I had red-headed Allison permanently. If his overwhelming conceit could be kept in check, he wasn't such a bad fellow at all. He tried several times to broach the subject of the lady passenger but as I saw it was merely to dilate on the impression he had made I declined to listen.

By virtue of my office as chief of the local division, I was privileged to lead the grand march at our annual ball. As I had no lady, Jack Burke promised to find me a partner. When he presented me to Miss Lily Effingham, I was delighted, and not a little confused, to recognise my former passenger. Explanations were impossible, so I just brazened it out. I was shaved now, and togged up, so I was more at ease than on our first meeting.

Miss Lily was a splendid dancer, and a bright and sensible girl. We became quite good friends during the evening, and she told me how pleased she had been at seeing me back on the engine.

"How could you have seen me?" I asked in surprise, for I was certain I had not seen her since I lay on the tender floor that day when she bathed my wounds so tenderly.

"Why, I see you every day," she replied; "you pass Uncle John's at a quarter past ten, and I always see you go by."

At ten fifteen I was due at the top of a heavy grade at Gregory's Mills. Gregory lived on the summit of the hill. As chairman of the railway men's club,

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I had worked like a Trojan for his election. I had become personally acquainted with him, and knew him to be a genial and hearty old fellow. I had not seen him since his election.

"Is he with us this evening?" I asked.

"Why, yes; haven't you seen him? There he is, with Mrs. Larrabee, over there."

We strolled over to where Mr. Gregory was entertaining the superintendent's wife. Miss Lily was about to introduce me, when he interrupted her with:

"Oh, I know Mr. Franklin. We are fellow-soldiers in the good cause. Mrs. Larrabee, permit me——"

"Not necessary, Mr. Gregory; I, too am acquainted with Mr. Franklin. He is one of our engine-drivers, you know. I have ridden a great many miles behind him."

We formed a party, in a corner, and I, for one, passed a remarkably pleasant evening.

"By-the-way, Mr. Franklin," said Gregory, as we shook hands at parting, "I want to see you about the expenses of the club; can't you run over to the house some evening next week? We are alone, Lily and I and will try and make it pleasant for you."

I glanced at her inquiringly. Seconded by her, the invitation would become a command to be obeyed.

"Wednesday evening we shall be at home. Will that be convenient for you, Mr. Franklin?" she said, with, I fancied, a slightly conscious flush on her face.

On Wednesday evening, which was perfectly convenient for me, Gregory met me at the door with a cordial welcome. Miss Lily received me with gracious hospitality in the large, old-fashioned parlour.

Ten fifteen became the most interesting moment in the whole twenty-four hours to me now. I never missed the flutter of a dainty handkerchief at the corner window of the old mansion, nor failed to return the signal. As I had to pound her pretty hard to get up the grade, the fireman was too busy to see what was going on.

Early the next autumn it was rumoured about that our superintendent of motive power was about to leave and that the chief of the middle division was to get his place. That would leave a vacancy for which there would be no lack of candidates, and the man with most influence would get it. I had no hesitation in invoking Gregory's aid. Here was a chance, if he wished to do something for me.

He asked me but one question: "Are you competent to fill the position?"

"Undoubtedly," I replied; "otherwise I would not have asked for your assistance."

He told me to leave the matter to him, and keep perfectly "mum."

When the change was finally made, several persons who had confidently asserted themselves as being sure of the appointment were wonderfully taken aback by the unexpected promotion of John Franklin.

Three months later, with Lily's permission, I tackled Gregory. He admitted that he had been expecting it, and was not displeased; "but, Joe," said he, laying both hands on my shoulders, and looking me squarely in the eyes; "I want you to prove yourself. Come to me a year from the day you were promoted, and if you still hold your position, she is yours."

I thought the terms hard, but railway men learn to wait long and be patient. With Lily's help and encouragement the nine months passed—it doesn't seem long now—and the old gentleman proved that he was as good as his word.

We had been married a week before I was able to muster courage to ask what she thought of me that day on the engine.

"I thought," said she, with a bewitching pout, "that you were the crossest bear I had ever seen, and that I should dearly like to have the taming of you."

"What about Allison?"

"Allison, who is he?"

"That red-headed fireman."

She gazed at me a moment in puzzled wonder, then, suddenly divining where the shoe pinched, she threw her head back, and rippled out a peal of laughter whose genuine heartiness would have swept away the last trace of jealousy from the mind of the most perverted bluebeard that ever lived.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, on regaining her breath, "he was too funny!"

Herbert E. Hamblen.

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JOHNSON'S wife's Aunt Mary, from whom the J's have had (but now cease to have) expectations, paid them a visit recently, and this is the plain unvarnished and truthful account of it all as it was told to me by Johnson himself:

Fat, my boy, well! I've seen a goodish bit in my time but I've never seen anything to equal it, never! Came in a four-wheeler—had to get in sideways and carted the bally thing over to such an angle that the cabby had to take on three chums on the roof to ballast it a bit, and even then he didn't get it straight.

Mary was out and I was up dressing when I heard the growler draw up at our gate. I didn't look out but judged by the heavy crunch of the wheels that it was the beer, and yelled down stairs to Georgina, to tell the man that the last barrel wasn't up to sample and that we should patronise another firm if he couldn't do something better for us.

Georgina went to the door and I was going back to my lather brush when I heard a terrific row out in the front and, rushing to the window, was just in time to see the cabby's three friends flying through space as if they had been shot out of a catapult. They hadn't, of course; they had been shot off the cab, aunty having stepped out and so upset the balance somewhat abruptly. The cabby thought the job would be cheap at half-a-crown, and he said as much; but being wealthy Aunt Mary is of course frugal, and she considered a shilling would be ample payment for the transport.

I felt sorry for the cabby; he struggled manfully to rise to the occasion and do it thorough justice; but he couldn't succeed even though aunty felt constrained to call him an impious, profane wretch and to talk of policemen.

Half Flatwater Terrace gathered round the house, and to save my reputation and Aunt Mary's feelings, I hastily wiped my face, struggled into a coat, and rushed out, overturning the grinning Georgina and interposing my form between cabby and his fare, who by this time was well on towards hysterics and finger-nails.

"Speak to the wretch, Dolphie," said Aunt Mary tearfully. "He wants half-a-crown just for driving me round from the station, and he has been most insulting."

"Has he?" said I meaningly. "Well, come inside—and I'll talk to you in a minute." This last was to the cabby who was about two and a half times my size and had a whip to boot.

Flatwater Terrace isn't adapted for people of my aunt's build, but she got in sideways after Georgina had cleared the hat-stand out of the hall, and I turned to the cabman.

He was inclined to be vicious and show fight when I asked very loud indeed what he meant by it; but he winked knowingly and smiled when I added *sotto-voce*, extending the disputed two bob, "put this away and hook it."

Aunt Mary had brought her pet cat, a vicious old tom, with her, and she had come, she said, for a fortnight. I said it was exceedingly kind of her, and longed fervently for Mary to come back.

In the meantime, Aunt Mary sat down abruptly on her niece's favourite wicker chair to rest before going upstairs to remove her things. I and Georgina helped her up again; but the chair was hopelessly done for—flat as a pancake. I told aunt it was of no consequence, but she evidently wasn't thinking of the chair, and she said somewhat stiffly that at her time of life such shocks were apt to be serious, and she wondered at Mary filling her house up with such flimsy rubbish. I said I was a bit surprised at it myself. As a matter of fact, the house itself was a bit flimsy, I pointed out, and I told the old

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geezer that we hoped by diligent application to grow older and bigger and so to fit ourselves to fill something more roomy and substantial.

Really I was annoyed about that chair; it had held us both comfortably (at different times, I mean, of course) often and often, and it had got associated in our minds with the early days of our marriage. Had Peterkins been underneath it when the crash came I could have welcomed the catastrophe, despite the rupture of sweet memories that it entailed; but there was no such luck. Peterkins was out in the kitchen sampling the cutlets that were preparing for our dinner, and Peterkins' method of sampling foodstuffs doesn't leave much residue for the least fastidious mortal to dine upon.

Peterkins was a holy terror. Aunt Mary had had the dear thing for six years, and during that time she had stuffed the bloated beast out to a miniature of her own unweildy proportions and petted it into the most vicious, spiteful, thieving brute that ever disgraced its race.

Georgina broke the loss of our dinner to us in her own crude fashion, bursting into the dining-room, where Mary and her Aunt had settled after the first affecting greetings, to discuss the remote days (nearly three years back) when Mary had been finishing out her course of maidenhood under the direction of her fat relative.

"Oh, please mum, the cat's been and nicked the chops," said Georgina, who's of cockney birth and West Ham breeding.

"Done what, Georgina?" queried Mary stiffly.

"Nicked the chops, mum. There's two blooming bones and a grease spot on the table cloth left of 'em," said Georgina, not without a certain exhibition of grieved dignity.

"Oh, I do hope they were fresh, Mary," ejaculated Aunty. "The poor dear is not used to common butcher's meat, and I'm afraid it will be bad for him."

"Pity it took them, then," said I. "I am, and I could have done with a couple of those chops without turning a feather. As it is, I suppose we may have a bone apiece, while Georgina banquets on the grease spot. Good old Peterkins!"

Aunt Mary glared at me in stony disapproval, and Mary suggested sweetly but with a secret underlying emphasis that I had better go and get on with my work. I went!

During the first week Aunty did for quite a respectable portion of our household goods and chattels by sitting on them unexpectedly before they had time to brace themselves up for the shock. She sat all over the place, even on my shaving-mug, and wherever she sat, ruin followed.

She went through two chairs besides the wicker one the first day, and in the night I dreamt of earthquakes and gas explosions only to find on investigation that Aunt Mary had gone through the spare-room bed.

It was an awkward sort of misadventure, because she didn't go completely through but was held in eminent danger of being throttled by the head and feet, and was only rescued in the nick of time by Mary and Georgina and a crowbar. I believe, though Mary was reticent about the details, that one levered her up while the other introduced cushions and mattresses and things below her until they got her on a level again and allowed her to roll off on to the floor and spend the rest of the night in hysterical revilings of us and our furniture.

Peterkins wasn't a bad second, but *his* talent for destruction lay principally amongst the crockery and foodstuffs.

It was a lucky thing for him that he had selected a wealthy mistress. We should have been within measurable reach of the workhouse if we had had to keep him for a month. But a cat who can eat a mackerel or so for breakfast, a fowl for lunch, and the remains of a cold joint of beef for supper, with odd meals of canary and pigeon in between, isn't intended for the homes of mere inkslingers. Nabobs and wealthy widows alone can aspire to the joys of such companionship.

Peterkins it was who added to the burden of Aunt Mary's presence, and it was Peterkins who relieved us of it, and of the last lingering hope of sharing in the wealth that helped to console its mistress's relatives for the connection.

Without her money Aunt Mary would have been superfluous—with it she was merely a nuisance. And this was how it came about!

Aunt Mary went off one fine morning to visit a cousin on the other side of London—Aunt Mary was provincial, and she used our house as a sort of centre, thereby killing all the necessary birds with one stone, so to speak.

She left Peterkins behind her, giving Mary strict injunctions to guard it closely and tenderly, dieting it with care and judgment, and on no account to forget its warm milk at eleven and its cutlet at one. Now Peterkins, as I have already hinted, was partial to pigeon *au natural*, and it retrieved them mostly from the man at the back, who was a fancier, and devoted considerable time and money to his hobby.

I was in town when it happened, and when I got back I found Mary in tears and distress. Peterkins was dead!

Only an unreasonable old woman such as Aunt Mary could have expected or suggested that Mary should become nurse to a beast of a cat and spend the whole day in running round after it to see that it came to no harm.

But shortly before twelve she did happen to remember it, and missing it from all its accustomed haunts indoors and, ominous sight! finding the dinner joint untouched, she went out into the garden to call it.

Before she could reach the back-door, the sharp crack of a revolver broke the solemn stillness of our suburban caterpillar parades, and shortly afterwards the *corpus* of Peterkins came flying over the back wall and landed into my cucumber frame.

With all a woman's tender pity, Mary gathered up the fragments that remained (of the cat. I mean, not the cucumber frame) and wept over them before she got out her best bonnet and went round to tell Jenkins what she thought of him.

Jenkins is a gentleman, and, despite the galling evidence of the feathers and fluff of three of his most valuable pigeons that he had to show in extenuation of his crime, he apologised contritely, and abjectly allowed the torrents of wrath to pour over him with only the mutest of protests. Mary showed him not the slightest mercy. Under the stimulating influence of the idea of her own neglect and her Aunt's sorrow and anger, she called him everything appropriate and inappropriate that her mind could suggest, from a cowardly assassin to a cold-blooded murderer, and she threatened him with me and the magistrates and whosoever else came handiest.

I went round, of course. I had to! Jenkins was out, I was glad to discover, and when I returned I found that a slight reprieve in the shape of a telegram from

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Aunt Mary announcing that she had arranged to stay all night (and bidding us to take care of Peterkins and allow him to sleep in our room because of his nerves) had been granted us.

Peterkins slept in the dust-bin—I placed him there with my own fair hands and went in to administer what consolation I could to Mary.

"Hang Aunt Mary and her wretched cat, any way," said I. "Let's have a comfortable supper and make believe that the house is ours for a change. We'll face the music to-morrow when it starts to tune up. Until then we might very well go back to our original state and enjoy life as we did before it became overweighted with Peterkins and his fat owner."

"She'll never forgive us," sobbed Mary.

"That's an affliction, truly," said I; "but we'll continue to exist even then."

"Couldn't we match it?" queried Mary late in the evening. She made brave efforts, but the dead cat out in the dust-bin weighed heavily on her spirits, and she harped on it continually.

"Impossible," said I, "you could sooner match Aunt Mary; such another fat, ugly beast doesn't anywhere exist in the whole kingdom. Of that I am well assured, and I fervently trust that my assurance is justified."

"Well you *will* go and see that man and make it uncomfortable for him," implored Mary.

"Rather," said I with grim determination. And in the morning I went.

"Mr. Jenkins," said I. "You shot my Aunt's cat and threw the body over into our garden again."

"Ye-s-s," he stammered. "I—er—that is, you know, it was killing my pigeons wholesale and——"

"Then lend us your hand," said I, cutting him short. "I admire you immensely. It's what I have been wanting to do for the past week and haven't had the courage. I'm proud of you. Lend us your hand again."

"But," said he in surprise. "Your wife intends to take out a summons against me."

"Not she," said I. "There, lend us that hand once more if you don't mind. That's a thing I should have to do and I'll hedge, you bet. But why on earth didn't you drop the carcase into your ash-pail and make a complete job of it? You couldn't manage to shoot the old woman as well, I suppose?"

Jenkins thought not, and I didn't press it on him.

"Well," said Mary when I returned. "Did you give it to the wretch?"

Mary's question was somewhat vague; but I perfectly understood what she meant, and I answered her diplomatically to the effect that I had made Jenkins thoroughly aware of the light in which I regarded the slaughter of Auntie's favourite cat. I added with perfect truth that Jenkins seemed more concerned about it than I did—he could hardly have been less.

About the affair of the summons I had to interpose; but I got Mary round to taking a rational view of the affair by pointing out that summonses cost money and time and much ill-feeling and dissatisfaction, and as we had in all probability lost whatever chance we might have stood of inheriting her Aunt's money, it wasn't much sense to go and throw all these things away after it.

At the thought of her shattered hopes, Mary's tears flowed afresh. We had planned a move when that melancholy event came off, to a modestly designed residence twenty miles out, with furnishings and appointments to match, and to lose it all over a diabolical cat *was* galling, I must admit.

"I wish Auntie had sat on the wretched animal," sobbed my wife spitefully. "She would have had it safe enough then."

"Eureka!" said I, jumping up and waltzing round the apartment in the glee of a sudden brilliant idea. "Aunty *shall* sit on Peterkins. She shall assassinate her own sweet pet afresh, and our sympathy shall be with Auntie even while we lament the cat. Mary, that's the best idea you have had for a long while!"

I went out and got the corpse of Peterkins and dusted it a bit, and then we deposited it on the seat of my big leather arm-chair, which Aunt Mary had appropriated as being the only one in which she felt she could trust herself with anything like security. I dropped an antimacassar over the remains and fled, leaving the plot to develop. Things went very well for us! Aunt Mary come home perturbed and irritable. A rude cabman called her a fat old cow in return for his fare, which was strictly legal as per usual, and advised her to patronise Pickford for the future.

"Did you ever?" said she in excited indignation dropping into the chair in a way which must have effectually settled Peterkins had he not been already comfortably settled.

We said we never did, and we never did, you know.

"Peterkins," said I, ten minutes later, in response to a whole string of questions regarding the welfare of that unhappy beast. "Oh, he's about somewhere. I saw him in here just before you came back."

Mere words fail to do justice to the situation when the tragedy was discovered. There was a suggestive flatness about the corpse that carried conviction to Aunt Mary's mind, and to our great relief she accepted the circumstantial evidence we had so elaborately prepared without a question, and blamed herself in heart-broken accents for the death of her pet.

"The poor dear," she sobbed. "He shall be stuffed and have the handsomest case I can procure for him."

I glanced at Mary and Mary dispatched mental telegraphs back at me.

"Better let me bury him, Aunt," I ventured to suggest "I can cut you off a wing or a foot for a keepsake—or the tail now! With an ebony handle and silver trimmings that would make a lovely memento, and in the summer you will find it useful as well to keep the flies off the Sunday joint. Or you could——"

"Thank you, Dolph," interrupted Aunt Mary stiffly; "but I prefer my own plan, and if you will put poor Peterkins away for the night I shall be greatly obliged. I will get you to see about the matter in the morning."

We put Peterkins in the meat-safe for the time being. I was for burying him; but Mary refused to allow it, and of course the silly cat-stuffer Aunt Mary went to gave the whole show away at the first go off—said what a shame it was to shoot such a splendid animal right before my face. Aunt Mary went into a fit on the shop floor, and crumpled up five pounds' worth of show cases and specimens, which served the old fool jolly well right. But it didn't help us any way, and when she came straight back, packed her luggage, and caught the midday express home again, we didn't need the icy little note that the postman left with us the next morning to inform us that our hopes had

"Folded their tents like Arabs
And silently stole away."

R. Andom

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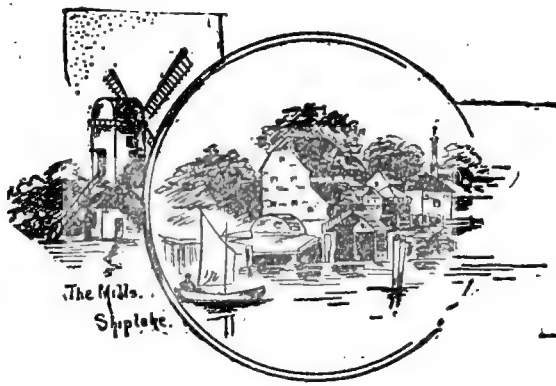


THE CHARITY BAZAAR.

IT was at a church bazaar, and he had come there at the request of his "cousin," who was at the head of the flower stall. He opened the door bashfully, and stood, hat in hand, looking at the brilliant scene before him, when a young lady rushed up, and, clutching him by the arm, said:

"Oh! you must, you will take a chance in our cake. Come over here. This way."

Blushing to the roots of his hair, he stammered out that he "really didn't have the pleasure of knowing——"

"Oh! that's all right," said the young lady. "You'll know me better before you leave. I'm one of the managers, you understand. Come, the cake will be all taken if you don't hurry." And she almost dragged him over to one of the middle stalls. "There, now, only half-a-crown a slice, and you may get a gold ring. You had better take three or four slices; it will increase your chances, you know."

"You're very good," he stammered. "But I'm not fond of cake; that is, I haven't any use for the ring—I——"

"Ah, that will be ever so nice," said the young lady, "for now if you get the ring you can give it back, and we'll put it in another cake."

"Y-e-e-s," said the young man with a sickly smile. "To be sure, but——"

"Oh, there isn't any but about it," said the young lady, smiling sweetly. "You know you promised."

"Promised?"

"Well, no, not exactly that; but you will take just one slice?" and she looked her whole soul into his eyes.

"Well, I suppose——"

"To be sure. There is your cake," and she slipped a great slice into his delicately-gloved hands, as he handed her half-a-sovereign in gold.

"Oh, that is too nice," added the young lady, as she plastered three more pieces of cake on top of the one she had just given him. "I knew you would take at least four chances," and his half-sovereign disappeared across the table, and then she called to a companion; "Oh, Miss Larkins, here is a gentleman who wishes to have his fortune told."

"Oh, does he? Send him over," answered Miss Larkins.

"I beg your pardon, but I'm afraid you're mistaken. I don't remember saying anything about——"

"Oh, but you will," said the first young lady, tugging at the youth's arm. "It's for the good of the church, and you won't refuse," and once more the beautiful eyes looked soulfully into his. "Here we are. Now take an envelope; open it. There, you are going to be married in a year. Isn't that jolly? A shilling, please." This time the youth was careful to hand out the exact amount.

"Oh, I should like to have my fortune told. May I?" said the first young lady.

"Of course you may, my dear," said Miss Larkins, handing out one of her envelopes. "Oh, dear, you are going to be married this year, too! A shilling more, please," and the poor youth came down with half-a-crown. "We have no change, sir," added Miss Larkins, putting it in her pocket.

"Oh, come, let's try our weight," said the first young lady, once more tugging at the bashful youth's coat sleeve, and before he knew where he was, he found himself standing on the platform of the machine. "One hundred and thirty-two," said the young lady. "Oh, how I would like to be a great, heavy man like you," and she jumped on the machine like a bird. "One hundred and eighteen. Well, that is light. One shilling, please."

"What," said the youth, "one shilling! Isn't that pretty steep? I mean, I——"

"Oh, but you know," said the young lady, "it is for charity," and another shilling was added to the treasury of the bazaar.

"I think I'll have to go. I have an engagement at——"

"Oh, but first you must buy me a bouquet for taking you all round," said the young lady. "Over here," and they were soon in front of the flower stall.

"Here is just what I want," and the young lady picked up a basket of roses and violets. "Ten shillings, please."

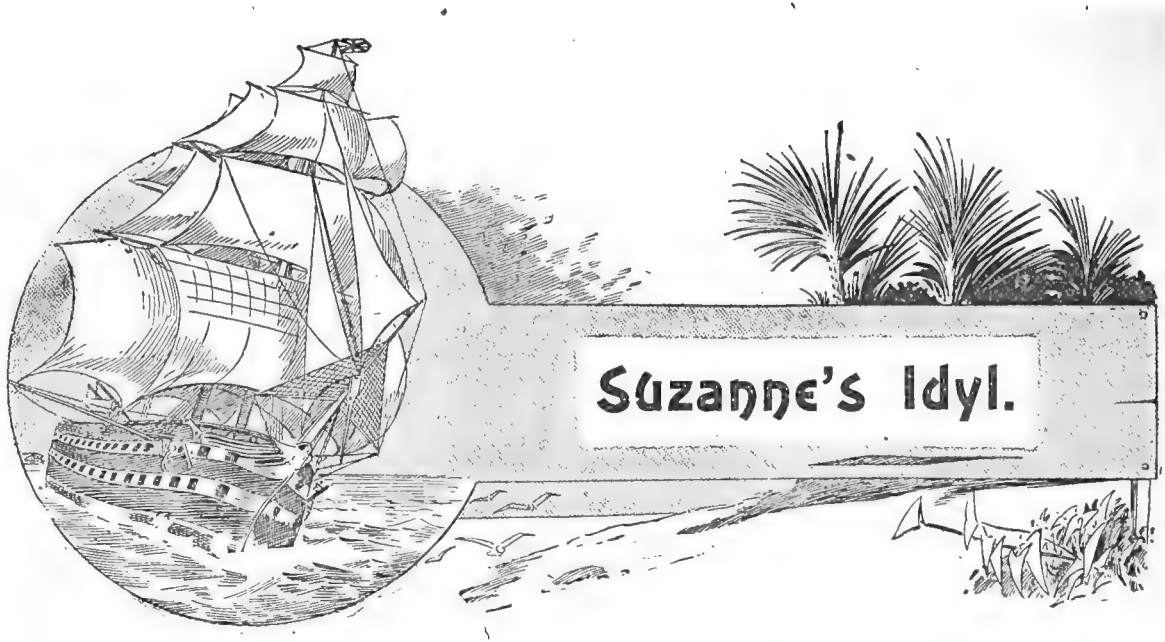
"Oh, Jack, is that you?" cried the youth's "cousin" from behind the flower counter, "and buying flowers for Miss Giggle, too. Oh, I shall be terribly jealous unless you buy me a basket, too," and she picked up an elaborate affair. "Fifteen shillings, please, Jack," and the youth put down the money, looking terribly confused and much as though he didn't know whether to make a bolt for the door or give up all hope and settle down in despair.

"You'll excuse me, ladies," he stammered; "but I must go; I have——"

"Here, let me pin this in your buttonhole," interrupted his "cousin." "Five shillings, please," and then the youth broke away and made a straight line for the door.

"Well, if ever I visit another bazaar may I be kicked," he ejaculated, as he counted over the cash to see if he had the train fare to ride home.

H. T. P.



Suzanne's Idyl.

"It is so tiresome in the country," said pretty Suzanne; "no amusement, no diversion. My father is cruel to make us pass three long months of the year in this place! If our castle were lost in the mountains! If we only ran some risk in living in it! I long for adventures."

Albert de Sennepont listened to his cousin in surprise.

What a queer temperament! She made him uneasy—this young girl whom he thought of marrying.

Did he love her?

He hardly knew; but there were certain facts concerning which he was not in ignorance—namely, that she was very rich, that he himself was poor, and that his mother, sister of the wife of M. de Saint-Hérem, was of opinion that he would have difficulty in making a better match.

Madame de Saint-Hérem had been dead three years. Then Madame de Sennepont, who had just lost her husband, had installed herself with her brother-in-law, in order to bestow her care on Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem, just in her sixteenth year. And she had formed the project of marrying her son to her niece.

But Suzanne did not evince any overwhelming anxiety to captivate her cousin, and he also was lukewarm at times. Still, Madame de Sennepont did not remain inactive. Everything that she could do that her niece might love her son, she tried.

Alone with Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem, she continually sang the praises of Albert. But is it, indeed, very certain that men without faults are always to the taste of young girls?

Certainly, Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem had some affection for Albert. Was he not her cousin? She loved him as one does the son of one's aunt, the nephew of one's father. But that seemed to be all.

And, with no suspicion of the projects of Madame de Sennepont and Albert, she made her cousin the confidant of her dreams. He was obliged to listen to the most romantic confessions of the young girl. She ingenuously declared to him that she would be happy to marry a man who would carry her off, as they do in all the tales of chivalry.

"But, my dear cousin," cried Albert, "such things are not done now! A young girl who allows herself to be carried off dishonours her family, and offends society."

"Well," replied Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem; "I want my adventure. Don't talk to me of a commonplace marriage! I read the other day the story of a society woman who, while on a walk, found herself suddenly among brigands. These wretches made ready to despoil her of her jewels; suddenly the chief of the brigands appeared; he was a gentleman who had become a bandit through misfortune.

"Perceiving the young woman, he recognised her, for he had often met her in drawing-rooms in former times. He threw himself at her feet, asked her pardon, and had her set at liberty: but—see how well all things fit in! This gentleman was the very one whom the young woman had loved; and, seeing him again, she felt her passion reawaken; she then extended her hand to the young man, and confessed to him her love, and they were married. Isn't that fine?"

"The deuce!" thought Albert. "If I want her, I must do something dramatic, skilfully prepared, in which I run no risk, and which will give me the appearance of an opera-hero. A very romantic episode!—night, lightning, thunder, brigands-in-jest and I myself arriving just in time to rescue the princess in danger. An affair of that kind might be managed, after all."

For some days the village in which the Saint-Hérem castle stood had been agitated by the arrival of a band of gypsies—half Spanish, half Italian.

The men were small and strong; but among them was here and there, one whose face, in spite of privations and fatigue, kept a kind of proud beauty beneath the hat of crumpled felt and the thin hair.

On what did they live? On alms; on strange remedies sold to peasants; on acrobatic tricks performed in the open air, on a carpet stretched in the dust of the road.

On the evening of the day on which the above conversation took place, Albert de Sennepont directed his steps toward the gypsies' camp. It was not without

some apprehension that he approached; but these poor people did not look like criminals; they were evidently more unfortunate than wicked.

The one who appeared to be in command came to meet Albert as soon as he saw him. What could this person of distinguished mien want of them?

Albert took him apart, and talked with him; and very soon, the face of the gypsy revealed first a swift grimace of surprise, then an expression of unbounded joy. The poor wretch smiled, his eyes twinkled, and, by little nods of the head, he acquiesced in all that Albert was saying.

Oh! it was very simple. It was only a pretended plot against the safety of Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem, which they discussed quite pleasantly.

The young girl took frequent horseback rides, often not returning to the castle until night. The gypsies would group themselves on the road in her way, and make a feint of assaulting her, and then Albert would appear and put them to rout.

"If, after that," thought the young man, "my cousin does not become literally crazy over me, then I shall no longer have any reason to hope!"

There was at first a little hesitation on the part of the chief, but Albert reassured him and arranged all the details.

On the morrow Suzanne, mounted on her favourite horse, went to explore the country round about the castle.

The day was splendid. Absorbed in thought, the young girl gave herself up to the guidance of her horse. She found herself in some woods, in paths but slightly worn, and she was breathing with pleasure the healthy scents of the forest.

When she came out of her reverie, the sun was setting. The weather had changed. Heavy clouds traversed the heavens, announcing a storm. The young girl urged her horse to a gallop.

She had just emerged from the forest, and was following the hollow, when she heard cries and saw shadows moving a few paces off. Her horse reared, and people of terrific aspect rose suddenly before her. Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem, greatly frightened, cried out loudly, and lashed the face of one of her assailants with her whip. But they pressed round her, menacing, furious.

Happily, at this moment, a man with a gun in his hand ran up from the forest.

"Wretches!" he cried, bounding towards the pseudo bandits.

The latter, on his arrival, fled precipitately.

"What! is it you, my dear cousin?" asked the newcomer.

"Albert!" cried Suzanne.

"Yes. I! and I have come in good time, I think! Without my intervention, these brigands would have given you trouble."

Mademoiselle had already recovered from her fright.

"Do you think so?" she asked, smiling.

"Undoubtedly! These gypsies are dreadful people; but they knew that I would have no pity, and, rather than struggle with me, they judged it prudent to retreat."

After his return to the castle, Albert gave himself up to joyful meditation. Surely, he was nearing the day of triumph. During the night his cousin would think of nothing but the danger to which she had been exposed, and the courageous intervention of Albert.

He had agreed that, not to worry M. de Saint-Hérem, the adventure of the evening should not be mentioned to him.

After dinner, Albert went to his room, and, having lain down, began to dream of the hour in which his cousin should throw herself into his arms, crying, like Doña Sol, in *Hernani*, "You are my hero!"

What, then, was his astonishment the next morning on learning that Suzanne had already had her horse saddled, and had set out for a ride!

"Her adventure of yesterday has not frightened her, then!" thought Albert; and he became a little uneasy. But he was reassured when he saw Mademoiselle returning. Hastening towards her, he cried out:

"So early, cousin? and may I ask where you come from?"

Mademoiselle, leaning on the arm which her cousin extended to her, lightly leapt to the ground.

"Ah, cousin," said she, "I am very unhappy."

"What has happened?"

"The most frightful thing!"

"But what?"

"Ah, well! this. I have no secrets from you. It is very serious. You must know that all night I was thinking of my adventure, of the gypsies, of their attack. And the face of one of them has not ceased to occupy my mind—a face at once charming and proud, the face that I have always given to the hero of my dreams. And with that a superb manner under his tattered garb. And this gypsy smiled on me, and he looked as if he would ask my pardon for having attacked me, and, my faith! I would smile on him in return."

"Ah! bah!" cried Albert.

"It is as I tell you! Isn't it foolish? To allow myself to be smitten by the smile of a wretch who would have killed me!"

"Thoroughly foolish, cousin."

"And what is more so is that this morning I wished to see my gypsy again. I said to myself that I should have no peace until I met him again. So I set out for the encampment, and there I found my hero!"

"And then!"

"And then,—I called him, as you stand there!"

"And what did he say?"

"Nothing. He had a pretty bouquet of flowers in his hand, and he held it out to me. See! Here it is."

And Mademoiselle took from her corsage a bouquet of spring flowers.

"It is an idyl!" said Albert ironically, a little out of countenance.

"Pure madness, I tell you!" cried the young girl. "To love a gypsy! to love a bandit! What a misfortune for me!"

Albert was quite pale.

"Think! you are not serious, cousin!"

"Very serious," she replied, in a decided tone, tapping the ground with her little foot: "I will have no other husband than this gypsy."

"But this is impossible!"

"Or, if I cannot belong to the man of my dreams, I will never marry!"

Albert did not see fit to continue the struggle. Decidedly his cousin was not for him. Two days after, he went back to Paris.

"When you write to Albert," said Mademoiselle de Saint-Hérem to her aunt, "do not forget to recommend him to choose his accomplices better another time. I strongly suspected something, and the gypsies, whom I questioned, did not show themselves brilliant by discretion. They had attacked me for three twenty-franc pieces; for four, they gave me the name of the one who arranged this pretty comic-opera scene."

Vivyan Matters.

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FOURTH INSTALMENT.

THE RED MEN OF THE DUSK

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ROMANCE.

By JOHN FINNEMORE.

SUMMARY.

GEOFFREY HEATHCOTE, who, for political reasons, is apprehensive of pursuit, leaves Butley Croft, in Worcestershire, and makes for the heart of Wales, where he has expectations of finding a sure refuge. Travelling among the Welsh mountains, Geoffrey narrowly escapes being trapped by a gang of thieves, and on a later occasion he joins in a fight against the same gang. Geoffrey then falls into the company of a hot-headed Welshman, who picks a quarrel. They fight, and Geoffrey, who has found more than his match, is saved by a woman, who is grateful to the refugee for having saved the life of her child. Suspicious characters gather round Geoffrey. Being mounted on a superior horse the refugee easily shakes off his wretched companions, and at a later period assists two ladies in escaping from a band of thieves. Geoffrey is hospitably entertained by a Welsh farmer, and on resuming this journey he encounters a handsomely dressed Welshman. The latter upbraids the English, and they fight with swords. At a critical moment the duel is stopped by the young girl whom Geoffrey had assisted, and who turns out to be no other than his own cousin. The refugee is welcomed by his uncle, with whom he stops. Geoffrey and his cousins Enid and Owain set out on an errand of mercy and are chased by "The Red Men."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIGHT IN THE HALL.

AFTER the attack upon Fron, and our meeting with them in Cwm Cul, the Red Men of the Dusk vanished as mysteriously as they had appeared. Every day my uncle waited eagerly for fresh news of their movements, but none came, and, little by little, as will happen when one's attention has been strained keenly to no effect, the thought of them almost passed from my mind.

It was full three weeks later when, one day, about four o'clock of a bitterly cold afternoon it began to snow in small, slow flakes out of a black and lowering sky. Almost with the first flakes came a very vivid flash of lightning, and a great peal of thunder, and within a short time a furious storm was raging. Surely no summer tempest ever saw lightning dart more sharply, or heard more deafening crashes from the sky, and through it all the snow fell, not heavily, but steadily.

There is something in my blood which does not permit me to be still when such turmoils are raging. Were I compelled to remain without moving from one spot I believe I should chafe myself to death and so, after my usual custom, I moved from window to window, watching the storm as well as the gathering darkness permitted. This uneasiness is a family trait for my uncle was equally disturbed, and was pacing his library end to end, his books thrown on one side, and returning only a pettish, snarling answer when spoken to. Enid was above stairs in her own room, and Owain, whom the weather did not disturb, was seated comfortably by the fire, fitting a new rowel into a spur.

As it happened, I went out into the hall, and found the man who was charged to watch the door—for my uncle kept someone on guard always—trying to light a large, clumsy lamp which hung there. Although the lamp had been made of a considerable bigness yet the bungling workman had contrived but a small door to it, so the man was thrusting in two fingers and between them a piece of glowing turf, upon which he blew to kindle the wick.

As I stood there, smiling to see the unconcern with which he handled naked fire, his horny fingers, I supposed, being almost devoid of sense, he looked up and caught my eye just as the wick smoked, and then flared brightly. I nodded to him in token of his triumph, and he, having no English, yet seeing plainly what I meant, touched his forehead in salute, and smiled all over his broad, simple face.

At that moment, there came in regular order the taps upon the door which my uncle had arranged that those belonging to the house should use after nightfall. The man went to a grating, drew back the panel, and peered out, and I went also and glanced over his shoulder. The night had so far fallen that he might have peered in vain, had not the sky opened with a broad sheet of flame. By the light of the flash a man was seen, bareheaded, and no sign of weapons about him, raising his hand as if to knock

again, and looking like one who had been a short distance on an errand.

Satisfied with his survey, the doorkeeper, slowly and leisurely, slipped back the ponderous bolts and drew the door a little open. He glanced round to see who would enter when a sudden, shining sweep of steel leapt upon him from without, and a keen axe fastened to a pikestaff clove his skull through and through. With a choking groan, the man who, the moment before, had smiled in my face like a child, rolled across my feet, and with his fall the door was hurled back, when, as silently as a hawk swoops, the Red Men of the Dusk sprang in at me.

An instinctive movement had already placed my sword in my hand, and I met the leader with the point, lunging with the play of my whole weight and strength. Meeting no bone the sword went through his naked body as if I had thrust at a curtain, and he dropped on the threshold. At the same time, though I knew it not at the moment, I gave a piercing cry, which rang to every corner of the house. I plucked back my dripping sword, warded a pike head thrust at my breast, cut, thrust, warded again, and thanks to the press in which my enemies had wedged themselves at the door, every man striving to enter first, held them steadily for the instant that was required to bring Owain to my side. His blade flashed past my shoulder and plunged swiftly again and again into the medley of axe and spear heads aimed confusedly at us. Not a single shot so far had been fired, and the only sound was the sharp clash and grate of cold steel.

I was dragged from among the tangle of feet.

Behind us, I heard a bell clamour out its shrill alarm, my uncle's voice screaming orders and the clatter of feet as the garrison ran to arms.

Before us, the half-naked savages, their eyes gleaming like sparks under their fells of matted red hair pushed against us in a dreadful silence like wild beasts too ferocious to utter a single warning ere they attack. It was but for a few moments that they impeded each other by their tangled huddling in the doorway, then a great voice which we both knew called on them from behind, and several fell back affording their comrades room to play their pikes.

But the delay had given us a backing of five or six stout fellows who swarmed up to the defence with sword and buckler. Up to this we had had but the light of the smoky lamp but now the storm burst forth afresh and much nearer. Great sheets of violet flame leapt from end to end of the sky, and seemed to burst in lambent floods through doorway and windows, the thunder followed instant upon the flash, and fighting with our faces to the storm, we were almost blinded by the dreadful glare followed by the inky blackness of the night closing over it.

With the second flash the voice of Ieuan Gwyllt rang out again, and the pikemen, agile as wild cats, strong as mountain bulls, charged furiously upon us. The superior reach of their weapons now told, and though, once and again in the glancing light, I put aside a pike head with my sword, a third reached me, took me in the side, and thrust me down headlong. Our men now closed over my body, opposing their bucklers to the points, and hewing furiously at the bare heads of the Gwylliard Cochion. I felt two hands twist themselves into my collar, and I was dragged from among the tangle of feet before I could turn myself to rise.

"Are you hurt?" cried Owain, in my ear.

"A mere scratch," said I, springing up. "The point caught in my doublet."

"Then we will fall back and guard the stair foot," said Owain. "They have the entrance, the other they must never have."

"Never," said I, and we hastened back.

The stairs ran up midway of the hall and facing the door. At the top of the first flight was a square gallery, and here was gathered a screaming band of women, clinging to each other, and now looking upon, now turning their heads from the medly of fight at the entrance. Enid, her faithful Siani close at hand, stood resolutely at the stair-rail; as we fell back, we waved our hands, and a white smile shone on her face.

We placed ourselves at the stair-foot and a shrill cry of delight broke out behind us. I turned my head and saw my uncle two or three steps up.

"Stand to it, nephew," he cried, "and beat them off. And yet," he added, and his tone now seemed one of chagrin, "I saw you fall."

"'Twas but a slip," said I, and glanced his way. The sky opened as I did so, and the murky, yellow-lighted place was filled with a glare beyond noonday. My uncle was biting his thumb and looking down upon me darkly. Owain began to shout commands in Welsh. Two men armed with muskets were darting up and down on the edges like terriers round a badger hole watching for a chance to help their fellows with shot. At Owain's call they ran back to him and he posted them on the gallery above and gave them orders. All this, which has taken some time in telling, took but little in the doing, and through it all the battle raged, on our side with great shouts and heavy cries, on the other

with a silence and mute ferocity, inexpressibly dreadful. I lifted my eyes and saw Miss Vaughan leaning over the rail. Our glances met and she spoke, her clear voice coming easily to my ears through the tumult.

"Are you hurt, Master Heathcote?" said she.

"Not in the least," I laughed back; "I was but pushed down."

"Ah!" cried Owain at my side. I turned my head and saw that our men were giving little by little, and now there appeared breaking his way easily through the fight the tall, sinewy form of Ieuan Gwyllt. To him this was mere play. He intercepted cut, thrust, stab and repaid

I pitched forward into a little ditch.

them with deadly interest, as a man might hew his way through a crowd of children. He was eagerly glancing from side to side and the first noise upon their side of the battle was the roar of dreadful joy he gave when he saw Sir Arthur on the stairs.

"Owain—neph——" began the latter in a tone of extreme entreaty, but his voice died away in his throat. We grasped our swords tighter and the muskets began to thunder over our heads. The garrison was being steadily driven back, and there was now room to fire over them into the mass of Red Men of the Dusk still in the doorway. The stifling smell of powder filled the air, the reports of the guns in the confined space were even more stunning than the thunder which rolled without, and my uncle began to scream in Welsh to the musketeers.

I could distinguish nothing but the word "Ieuan," but his meaning was easy enough to take. He was bidding them mark down Ieuan Gwyllt, but Ieuan was now in the midst of our own men, and they were as likely to hit friend as foe.

I searched the landing once more with my eye, and saw the reason of the shots following one on another so closely as they had done. Several spare firelocks were leaning ready to the hands of the men, and were being charged again as soon as fired by Miss Vaughan and Siani. I turned again and saw Ieuan Gwyllt breaking through the last fringe of the skirmish, and rushing upon his prey. He was followed by a gigantic Red Man of the Dusk, whom I had observed in the fight close at Ieuan's back.

"I'll take Ieuan," said I. "You take the big man."

"No, no," said Owain, but chance settled it as I had said. My uncle, had posted himself behind me, having seen me beat Owain once or twice at friendly trials of fence, and Ieuan darted for him. I sprang out to meet him, and our swords clashed together once more. Ieuan's eyes were mere holes in his head through which white flames peered, he churned his teeth like a wild boar so that his great, red beard was all beslavered with foam, his nostrils were black and wide, and he was deadly cool.

"Stand away," said he holding my point easily as before, "and give me that bad old man behind you, and we will go from the house, yes, everyone."

My uncle was beyond speech. He was uttering small odd noises, like a wild animal caught in a gin.

I made the only reply possible to Ieuan's offer, and that was to engage him more desperately than ever. He hung back for a moment watching my wrist, then, with a trick of fence of which I had never seen the like, he plucked my sword from my grip and I heard it tinkle against the roof.

I sprang at him with my naked hands but he dropped his point, clenched his great, hairy fist, and met me with a tremendous blow. It just missed my throat, took me on the breast bone and hurled me backward on the stairs. My uncle fled upwards, screaming, and Jeuan leapt after him, his sword upraised.

With a sharp, brittle sound, a ball from above shattered the sword to pieces near the hilt, and, in his rage, Ieuan flung what remained in his hand at the marksman. The second piece was now laid upon him, and Ieuan, calculating as ever in the midst of his rage, turned and darted back.

The man, fearing to hit one of us, shot wide, and the bullet buried itself in the oaken wainscotting. As Ieuan flew down, I was just scrambling to my feet, and Owain was driving his big opponent before him. In the body of the hall our men were quickly regaining their lost ground, and, looking out upon them, I noticed for the first time that the place was filled with a bright, dancing light shining in redly at the windows.

The cause was in full sight. The lightning had fired an outhouse, which was blazing furiously. As I have said our men were now gaining the upper hand, for the constant shower of balls from the marksmen posted on the gallery both deadly shots, had thinned the ranks of the Red Men of the Dusk. Ieuan ran down the hall, dodged one or two blows aimed at him, caught up a pike from the hands of a man huddled on the flags, and placed himself at the head of his followers. I scrambled for my sword which had fallen within two yards of me and glanced at Owain. At the same instant he looked at me.

"A rush now would break them," he said.

"Ieuan is beginning to draw them off," I answered. It was even so. His band looked strangely reduced though none had been seen to fly, and they were now outnumbered. Making dreadful play with his pike he was moving steadily back. Owain turned his head and shouted to the two men on the gallery. They ceased firing at the enemy and laid their weapons to cover the stair foot.

"Now," cried Owain, and we flung ourselves into the midst of the fray, shouting and slashing our maddest and hardest.

Our advent gave renewed heart to the men of Nant y Bryn. It was like plucking up their spirits with a trumpet and they charged with a mighty shout. For some few minutes the struggle was still waged desperately but now we fought as men fight whose victory is assured; the subtle wine of triumph mounted to our brains and drove us carelessly on the foe. There was no gradual slackening of the battle. The Red Men of the Dusk held their own without flinching till of a sudden, they gave wholly and completely, like a bank of mist before a strong wind and we poured through the

doorway chasing an enemy whose speed made it a folly to pursue. Outside, great sheets of flame were leaping up into the blackness of the dying storm. The fire had spread to a wooden granary but the whole clump was detached and could injure nothing else. The ground was covered with a thin, smooth sheet of snow, taking the gleam of the fire ruddily and making the place light as day. Heated with combat I ran with several others thirty or forty yards from the door upon the heels of the flying foe before I recovered enough sense to desist. To think of catching them was useless, and I stopped and lifted up my face to the grateful cold of the night. Behind me the muskets cracked again and again as shots were fired at the dark figures of the Red Men of the Dusk gliding up the whitened hill. I drew a deep breath and looked round upon the shining scene when a gunshot echoed from the house, and I felt as if a stream of fire were passing across my bare head. A strange weakness came over my limbs, a great buzzing sounded in my ears, and I pitched forward into a little ditch upon the brink of which I had paused.

CHAPTER X.

Who Fired the Shot?

It could only have been a minute or two at the farthest before I came to myself again, yet I seemed to wake out of a deep gulf of unconsciousness. Something warm was trickling down my face, and my head was still singing like a humble-bee. I put a hand up slowly to my cheek and wiped it, then lifted the hand and looked at it. It was covered with blood.

The ditch was so shallow that though my body lay entirely in shadow and darkness, yet I could lift my hand into the shine of the fire. As I did so, a white face was slowly thrust over the edge of the ditch, and I saw Sir Arthur Vaughan peering down at me. His eyes and mouth were wide open, and his features were rigid and drawn, with an expression between horror and expectation, and when he saw the bloody hand raised against him out of the pit, he shrieked fearfully.

With a great effort I sat up, and upon finding that I was assuredly alive, his terror seemed to abate.

"Heathcote! Heathcote!" I heard my name shouted hither and thither in Owain's ringing voice, and just as I began to collect my wits he flew up to the place.

"What has happened?" he cried.

"I am not quite sure," I replied, slowly, "but I fancy a musket-ball has furrowed the top of my head."

"A musket-ball!" said Owain. "Who should fire at you? They had no muskets." He helped me to my feet, and turned to speak to Sir Arthur, but my uncle was slipping back towards the house.

"Did you get into the line of fire?" went on Owain. "Yet that would be strange, for Evan and Mocyn are sure shots and would never lay their pieces towards you."

The hair was clipped away from the wound.

I could give no help in solving the mystery, and upon reaching the house Owain had too much to do to trouble further in the matter at present. Half a dozen bogwood torches had been hastily lighted and stuck about the hall, and my uncle was now busily engaged in summing up the fight. He seemed to avoid my eye at first, then he lifted his finger and beckoned me. I was now pretty well myself again and I crossed the hall towards him.

"Nephew," said he, in a high, gay voice. "Was ever such luck as this battle? I have lost but three men outright, the others will mend for they are as healthy as hill cattle; we have killed five of these rogues and have their bodies to show, and, do you hear that? I say, do you hear that? There's music for you!" He lifted his finger and listened, with his ear close to the panel of a door near which he stood. At my uncle's elbow was a small man, with keen, twinkling, black eyes, looking as proud as a peacock.

"Shinkin did it. Shinkin did it," cried Sir Arthur in a thin, chuckling voice. "Oh! but I'll thin out their band for them."

He became silent again, listening eagerly, and I listened, too. Pit-pat, pit-pat, soft footfalls were going steadily within. Pit-pat, pit-pat, it sounded, as if a number of gigantic rats were imprisoned there, and was scurrying over the floor with unceasing, unresting haste.

"What have you in there?" I asked.

"Some more of the rogues," cried my uncle in high glee. "They cut off Shinkin in this doorway here, he slipped in, and they streamed after him, a whole string of them, he says.

It was dark inside, and he doubled behind the door, slipped out again, and shot the bolt on them. Oh, noble, noble."

"And can they not escape?" said I.

"Escape!" cried Sir Arthur. "And how? There is no chimney, and the walls are four feet thick. There are two windows to the room, and one door. Here is the door, and the windows are ironed with inch bars. Newgate is no safer."

"What are you going to do with them?"

"Set a guard to watch the room till morning, and then take such measures as may seem best," replied he.

My head was paining me in such a fashion that I now began to feel a little confused, and I turned away and crossed the hall, along which men were already dashing buckets of water to cleanse away the stains of the fight, and went up the stairs. Midway, on the long gallery above I came full upon Enid Vaughan, as she stepped swiftly from a chamber whence came a melancholy groaning as of the wounded. She had a candle in her hand and as the light fell upon me she stopped with a whitened cheek and a sharp cry.

"Oh, Master Heathcote!" she said, and the concern in her voice was sweet to my heart. "What has happened? You are wounded!"

I bethought myself then that my face was daubed with blood, and no comely sight, and I hastened to reassure her.

"It is nothing, Miss Vaughan," I replied, "a graze upon the head from a passing bullet, which has cost me more hair than blood."

"Sit down here," she said, and I sat down obediently on a chair close at hand. She raised her voice then and called on Siani, who came upon the spot and fetched a bowl, and water.

"Indeed," I said, "you give yourself far too much trouble. Had I but a bucket of water to dip my head and face in you would scarce know I had been touched."

But she would not suffer me to escape thus, and, with the help of Siani, the hair was clipped away from the wound, the blood washed off, and a bandage with some healing ointment placed upon it. I felt ashamed to occupy her so long over such a trivial matter, and yet would have been willing to sit thrice as long to feel the play of her soft light fingers about my head. Siani held the candle, and she gazed upon the wound and met my eye more than once with a look of queer mysterious understanding of which at the time I could make nothing.

Miss Vaughan was just making an end of her task when there was a clatter of feet upon the stairs and up bounded Owain.

"I was looking for you, Heathcote," he exclaimed, "but I find you in good hands."

"In most excellent hands," I replied. "I am ashamed to give Miss Vaughan so much trouble for so slight a cause."

"Enid is a soldier's daughter," laughed her brother, "and does not flinch from wounds or the sight of blood. But I am puzzled to know how you came by your hurt. The men declare that they fired every shot up the hill."

"At a time of such tumult and confusion, it is impossible to account for every ball," I returned. "I am thankful it was not an inch lower. I was foolish to pursue fliers so nimble."

A woman who was attending upon the wounded now came to seek directions from Miss Vaughan, and she was called away, receiving my thanks with a smile as she went. Then Sir Arthur called upon Owain to find and set a guard over the prisoners, and I was left alone. I went to my own chamber, and, still feeling somewhat dizzy, lay down, after wrapping my cloak round me, when I soon fell fast asleep.

Upon my awaking, the room was in darkness and the house silent, save for a faint, measured footfall below, that of the guard over the prisoners. I lay staring into the gloom around me for awhile, and then a faint, grey glimmer upon the pane told me that the day was breaking, and I sprang up. I had lain down with my head too confused to think clearly about things. I rose up with the firm conviction, how reached I know not unless in my dreams, that it was my uncle's hand which had fired the shot against me. I went down to the hall and found two men on guard. The day broadened slowly, and the shine of fire and candle from various rooms showed that the household was fully astir. I drew the bolts at the door and stepped out into the cold morning air. The weather had settled down to a keen frost, and a bitter east wind was blowing steadily. A cold, grey sky hung over the bleak outlines of the hills, and somewhere below the house mattocks and spades rang shrilly as a large grave was hewn in the frozen earth for the fallen.

A footstep sounded on the flags before the house, and I turned my head and saw Sir Arthur approaching me. He shivered, and rubbed his hands together as he came.

"How biting, how cruel is the wind!" said he. "Well did the old Welsh call the east wind 'Gwynt Traed y Meirw'—The Wind of the Feet of the Dead. Ah! name of dreadful poesy."

He coughed feebly, and drew his cloak closer about him. He looked so old, so worn, so broken, that a feeling of involuntary pity stirred at my heart; yet the conviction I have mentioned remained unshaken, and I spoke not to him. He made another careless remark, as if he had not observed my silence, and went down to the workmen, while I turned and re-entered the house.

CHAPTER XI.

The Captives.

Upon the conclusion of breakfast I saw Enid Vaughan cast a significent glance towards her brother; I had observed that not once had she spoken to, or even looked in the direction of, Sir Arthur.

"What is to be done with the prisoners shut up there, sir?" asked Owain. "Ought they not to receive food?"

My uncle started as from a reverie, but did not raise his eyes, as he answered: "I have formed my plans for dealing with them and things are in train."

"And what is the first step?"

"To secure them in bonds, that they may do us no further mischief." He rose as he spoke and went from the room. Owain and I followed him at once. He made for the courtyard and by the instant information of Owain, who was uneasy when anything was said in my presence which I did not understand, I was enabled to follow perfectly every incident which now took place.

"Ha!" cried Sir Arthur in a tone of satisfaction, and we saw the two marksmen, Evan and Mocyn, each posted at a window with the muzzle of his piece between the bars, and pointing inwards.

"Are they going to shoot the poor wretches in their prison?" I asked.

"I don't think so," replied Owain, "but I certainly cannot answer for what he is going to do with them."

Owain's tone showed that he put but little faith in my uncle's mercy, and we continued to follow the latter as he walked towards the nearer window.

A glance through the unglazed iron bars showed that the captives were six in number. Bitter as was the season, their nakedness was covered with but a few rags, and they lay on the stone floor of the large, low room as composedly as a man lies on a bed. Four of them were lying down; the other two were leaning against the wall, blinking carelessly at the muskets pointed directly upon them. Mocyn and Evan had watched their opportunity, slipped the guns in at the window, and bidden them remain as they were, offering to shoot the first man that moved. So the pikes, which were their only weapons, save for large, savage knives, lay on the floor as they had placed them, and they slept or stood idly about them, awaiting, with an appearance of perfect unconcern, the pleasure of their captors.

Sir Arthur counted them over and over again, drawing deep breaths of satisfaction. Then he put his face close to the bars, and began speaking in sharp, clear tones. He made a short speech, and paused. He spoke again, and I recognised the same sounds. He paused once more.

"He is bidding them submit themselves to be pinioned, one at a time, or they shall be shot down as they stand," whispered Owain in my ear. "He is also," and this was

Seized upon the boy with a dreadful outcry.

said very drily, "making them a great quantity of promises which I don't——" Owain stopped in a little confusion, and I looked upon the prisoners. One of them was a long, lean elderly man, and the others, without a word having been spoken among them, all turned their eyes upon him. Sir Arthur began speaking again, but instantly stopped as the tall man straightened himself from the wall, flung his knife to the other side, and went to the door, weaponless. My uncle blew a loud shrill call on the whistle which hung at his button, and the door was cautiously opened, and the prisoner disappeared.

The same process was gone through with each of the other five, and then we went round to the hall, where we found the captives ranged along a bench. Their arms were closely pinioned behind, and their ankles were bound with leathern pony shackles in such fashion that they could move at a shuffling walk, and no faster. A guard of seven or eight men stood over them, and women's faces peeped from the lower end of the hall, eager to catch a glimpse of the terrible Red Men of the Dusk. The latter bore themselves with the stoicism of true savages—they barely deigned to look around them—and when, by chance, I met a glance from one, he eyed me as coldly and hardly as if he stood in a purely indifferent situation.

Sir Arthur uttered a few words of command, and the line of prisoners with their guards was set in motion.

"Shall we go with them?" said Owain.

"Will the house be safe?" I asked.

"Several men will be left to watch it," he replied, "and if you wish for my opinion, I do not think we shall go far."

Sir Arthur took his place between two well armed attendants at the head of the procession, and it moved up the mountain road, a couple of active fellows on either side of the way searching every hollow where an enemy might be concealed as a precaution against surprise. Owain and I brought up the rear. Our pace was timed to that of the shackled, shuffling prisoners, and we mounted the hill very slowly. I looked upon the wild, pinioned figures before me, and felt the irony of the circumstance that we should be marching thus to accommodate these children of the mountain, who had hitherto flown over its face nimbly as the wild goat.

Half a mile from the house we turned to a side track, and Owain nodded to himself. "I was sure of it," he said in my ear.

"Of what?" I asked.

Owain said nothing for the moment, but half lifted his finger. We topped a little rise and he pointed before us. A short distance in front was a steep hill crowned with a clump of ragged, stunted trees.

"He will hang them to those trees and leave them swinging there as we do crows in a cornfield," said Owain.

"Without trial, without form of law?" I asked.

"Trial! Law!" repeated Owain. "Those are words of little import here as regards the common people, aye, and for plenty above them. And indeed, who is there to inquire or care for what becomes of such rogues as these? Those who hear of it will praise Sir Arthur heartily, and the relations whom the Red Men leave behind them are little likely to prosecute him at law for his lack of form in disposing of their friends."

"But they will exact a dreadful revenge."

"They are bent on that now, in any case," replied Owain. "And he will leave the fewer to execute it."

In a short time we were up among the trees, and at a glance I saw what a spot Sir Arthur had chosen for his gibbet. On every hand the country lay below us like a map. Far to the west a grey level patch marked the sea, and the slant of the stunted trees told of the winds which raced in from that quarter. The Red Men of the Dusk looked around them with quick, uneasy glances as they were halted in the tiny wood, and when a mountain pony came scrambling up after us laden with coils of rope, every man turned his fierce eyes upon my uncle, and uttered a deep, guttural cry of scorn.

Two of them made an attempt to burst their bonds and run, but it was useless, and within the instant they were struck down and pinioned still more securely. The other four, after that single note of rage and scorn, remained as impassive as the hills around them. I now saw for the first time that one of them was a mere boy, not more than fourteen years old. Even as I looked the tall, elderly man, who had seemed their leader, moved a little towards the lad, and began to speak to him in a low, caressing voice. The savage mask dropped off, and his features worked with strong emotion. This, and the likeness that existed between them, made the situation clear—they were father and son. The boy paid but little heed, nodding carelessly now and again, and looking from side to side with a sullen glare.

Sir Arthur now began to call out quick orders, and his men ran right and left. In a trice half-a-dozen ropes were run over branches lofty enough to swing the Gwylliard Cochion several feet from the ground, and the execution proceeded swiftly. Already four figures were writhing in horrible contortions, when a woman darted into the circle and seized upon the boy with a dreadful outcry. Her scream was echoed by my uncle, who doubted not but to see a whole band upon us, and there was a general run to arms. But no one else appeared, and the poor creature who had got among us must have exercised wonderful cunning to evade the sentries posted about the hill.

She was an elderly woman, though it is likely she was not so old as she looked, for so wild a life must age them beyond their time. Her foul, tangled, scanty elf-locks, once red, now bleached to a dry wheaten shade by weather and years, hung low over her hard, worn features, her great, dark eyes looked unnaturally large and bright in their hollow sockets, and as she fondled her child, the business

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we were engaged upon, distasteful before, now seemed to me dismally repulsive.

The little group drew every eye, and for a few moments no one moved or spoke: father, mother, and son, even the rude fellows who were stringing up the Red Men of the Dusk as indifferently as if they were hanging salmon to smoke, stood at gaze, struck by the dramatic quality of the scene.

My uncle alone remained unmoved and venomous; he shouted an angry order, and the woman cried out as if she had received a wound. She turned and flung herself upon her knees before Sir Arthur, pouring out, with tears and uplifted hands, frenzied entreaties that he would spare her son, her youngest, her dearest; for her husband she uttered no plea, she knew it would be useless, but she begged for the boy's life in terms which moved every listener but one. There was no need to be able to understand her words; the piercing quality of pathos and longing in her voice went to the very heart. Had she spoken nothing, the simple, natural eloquence of her entreating gestures would have said everything. My uncle took but little heed of her, called out to his men again in a harsh, grating voice.

"Poor soul," said I to Owain. "It would be a burning shame to kill her child before her very eyes. But surely Sir Arthur will not go so far as that."

"H'm," said Owain. "It is hard to say."

Upon that hint I stepped forward.

"Uncle," said I, "will you not let the poor woman take the boy, at any rate? He is but a mere lad, and certainly we ought not to take vengeance upon children."

My uncle turned and looked at me, his mouth set in a hard, cruel smile. "Would you spare a young adder because it is young?" he answered. "Will it not shortly become full grown, and who is to blame then if it stings you?"

He said no more, and I heard a scuffling noise behind me. I turned my head, and saw that a rope was already round the neck of the Red Man of the Dusk. He was dragged to a tree near at hand and run up instantly. The woman, with a harsh scream, ran to the boy and held him tightly in her embrace, her face streaming with tears and her voice choked with sobs.

I made another attempt to move my uncle, but he turned on me, his face black with rage.

"I tell you, nephew," he cried, "that I would hang every one I could lay my hands on, and these fellows would gladly assist me. You talk like a raw boy, whose heart softens at every whine he hears. We must root out these rogues, we must, we must!"

He raised his voice and gave a view-halloo, as of one cheering his hounds on their prey, and I turned my head and saw that the lad was being torn from his mother's clutch. She struggled and fought like a wild cat, but in vain. Feeling her arms empty, she gave one dreadful cry, then sprang towards Sir Arthur. He whipped out his sword and turned its point upon her; but she stopped at a distance of several feet from him and stood at her full height, her tears gone, her eyes darting flame. With a great gesture she clutched the rags which covered her breast, and tore them away, laying her withered bosom bare to the chill wind.

"These breasts," she cried shrilly, and beat them with her clenched fist, "these breasts have given suck to other sons than this, and they still live. They will avenge their little brother. Be sure they shall dip their hands in the warmest blood of your heart for this day's work."

"Is there no rope left for her?" screamed Sir Arthur. "Hang her up! Throw down one of those rogues already dead and seize her. She must carry no tales back to her tribe."

I saw a couple of men advance upon her, and she eyed them unshrinkingly. The last grain of my patience ran out and I drew my sword and stepped between.

"Not while I can lift an arm to stop you," said I. "No, no. Those men, that is one thing; this woman, another. What! put to death in cold blood the mother who rushed into danger to embrace her child for the last time!" and I placed myself in ward.

I believe now that I should have fared very hardly on that occasion had not Owain also interposed, for my uncle's followers were scarcely less ferocious against the Gwylliard Cochion than himself. But when Owain spoke up and declared that he would stand by me in the matter, things assumed a different look. Men who, at a look from my uncle, would have attacked me instantly, would not stir a step against Owain, and Sir Arthur knew it. For an instant he glared at me savagely, his dark eye burning bitterly, his thin, fine face drawn and white; then, with a single glance round the six figures now hanging horribly limp and still, he gave an abrupt signal for departure.

Owain and I were the last to leave the little wood, and as we went down the hill, well to the rear of our companions, we heard the long, piercing, wailing cry of the Red Woman of the Dusk mourning her dead.

(To be continued.)

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The Nearness of Death.

He was a bad lot. So, at least, had thought several of the inhabitants of Brisbane Terrace, which eminently respectable neighbourhood he had honoured with his presence for some hours past.

The neighbourhood in which the terrace was situated was one of the quietest and most severely respectable to be found in all suburban London, and the favoured mortals resident therein were naturally deeply imbued with the dislike which respectability entertains towards slouch caps, wisp neckerchiefs, and rags.

He was not tall; if five feet six, certainly no more. He was not old either; one would have felt assured in saying that he was not over twenty. But he was undeniably ugly, and he looked unmistakably brutal. His shoulders were broad, but inclined forward, so contracting his chest. A low forehead, small, deep-set, grey eyes, flat nose, wide mouth with strong teeth and massive jaw of the true bull-dog type, made up a face of which the impression was both sullen and brutish.

Exactly an hour had elapsed since he had turned this particular corner, moving with that indescribable shuffle which seems peculiar to the genus rough, and after looking up and down the street, settled himself in position against the wall. He had not moved since, except once, when the sight of an exceptionally tempting straw had made him cross the road in order to secure it.

The object of his watch was not very apparent. The locality was not one likely to be selected by those who might reasonably be supposed to be associates of his, unless, indeed, a scouting expedition was on foot with a view to facilitating prospective burglary. But then it was too early for that. Besides, had the watcher at the corner been a burglarious spy, he would not have stayed there, where he could see little or nothing; and had he been awaiting the return of such a spy, he would not have done so at a point so open to observation, and at which a policeman might arrive at any moment.

He was not begging either. Although masculine humanity seemed to have altogether deserted the place, he made no attempt to approach a single door, and although the quietness and openness of the street offered great facilities to any one bent on speedy plunder, and speedier escape, he had not shown the slightest intention of speaking to, much less of frightening any one of the passers-by.

An hour and a-half had passed, and still he had not stirred; only stood there, nibbling the straw and raising his head at times to look, first up, then down the street, always bringing his eyes back to the same spot of the road.

A policeman appeared at the far end of the terrace, and, after surveying the position for full five minutes, advanced with slow deliberation along the railing.

"Hillo!" began the policeman, as he came up. "What are you doing here?"

"Nothin'."

"Then if you're doing nothing, you'd better move on," was the sharp reply.

"Well, I ain't agoin'."

"Then I'll make you—to the station," returned the policeman angrily, as he stepped forward, and caught him by the collar.

"Look 'ere, you ain't got nothin' agin' me; I ain't bin adoin' nothin' to nobody. I want to stay 'ere for a bit. I'm awaitin' to see somebody as I seed in the 'orspital."

"What hospital?"

In answer to this question the man related at some length how he had been an inmate of one of the City hospitals, and how the clergyman, who had frequently visited the ward wherin he lay, had brought with him a visitor, whom he, the narrator, now wished to see, with much more of a similar nature. As he proceeded the other moved his hand from his prisoner's collar, and listened with some curiosity. The queer petitioner concluded with:

"I on'y got out last week, an' I on'y found out as the

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—the—as wot I want to see stays somewheres 'ere. I ain't agoin' to speak nor ax nothin', an' arter that I'll go away an' won't trouble nobody. Will yer, guv'nor?"

As he asked the question he looked anxiously at his companion, and twisted the straw nervously in his grimy hand.

The policeman stood irresolute.

"It's a rum go," he said at last. "If I was sure. Who is it? A lady or a gentleman?" suddenly.

The dogged look came back to the man's face. He stood away from the wall.

"That ain't nothin' to nobody," he replied. "Afore I'll tell that I'll go to the station."

The other looked at him keenly.

He met the scrutiny with a firmness not without its effect.

"Well," said the policeman, after some minutes of reflection, "I don't know that I'm doing right, but I'll give you an hour. If there's nobody up to that time you'll walk and just mind that I'll keep my eye on you."

And he did.

Ensconcing himself in a pillared doorway some fifty yards off he kept his eyes steadily fixed upon the ruffianly figure leaning against the sunny wall and staring into the roadway.

Only ten minutes of the stipulated time remained. The policeman had shifted his standpoint several times, and had grown thoroughly tired of it all, but the other had not moved. Just as the former had restored his watch to his pocket for the twentieth time, he saw his suspicious acquaintance lift his head for the usual up and down inspection. He looked up the long street, then turned his head in a slow way towards the lower end of it. As he obtained a full view, the hidden watcher saw him start forward a little, and remove his hands from his pockets, take the straw from his mouth with the right, and pull the peak of his cap farther over his eyes with the other.

The policeman had barely noticed these movements when he heard footsteps behind him. Turning quickly, he saw two people approaching, a man and a girl. The former was a grave middle-aged gentleman, dressed in black, and having the appearance of a prosperous professional man; the latter was a tall, ladylike girl, plainly but tastefully attired, and evidently about eighteen years of age.

Watching the two nearing the corner where the now motionless figure of the queer suspect stood like a black splash against the sunny wall, he saw the latter raise his head slightly, as if peering from under the peaked cap. After they passed he rose to his full length, and stood looking after them. The policeman left his shelter and went towards him.

The man did not seem to hear the other's footsteps as he drew near, and it was not till he felt a hand placed on his shoulder that he became conscious of the policeman's proximity. He started, and removing his eyes from the two figures, now almost at the upper end of the terrace, said:

"I'm a-goin' now."

"Which of them was it?" curiously.

For answer the other suddenly turned away, and made off round the corner. The questioner seemed inclined to follow him for a moment, then thought better of it, and resumed his regulation tramp up the terrace with an amused grin on his face.

The rough proceeded down the road. He did not seem to have any clear purpose, but wandered on in an aimless way, with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his jacket and his eyes bent on the ground.

Mile after mile was passed, and still he gave no indication of stopping. He had long left the busier portion of the city behind, and was nearing the open country. He climbed a fence into a field, and flung himself down on the ground, his head buried in his arms.

Of what was he thinking? The long ward with its white floors and rows of cots, the flickering figures of the nurses, the cheerful faces of the doctors, the sameness, and the weakness—all the old sights and feelings came back till he saw and felt them over again.

And then that day when beside the kind grave face of the parson, he saw another; a pure, refined face, with clear pitying eyes and gentle mouth. He remembered how strangely it had affected him before she spoke, and then—he dug his ironshod heel savagely into the grassy bank.

Then his mind reverted to the days of his early childhood. The picture was dark enough. A mother who cared for her children only in so far as they could soon beg or steal that which would minister to her depraved appetite; a father who never cared for them at all; a home wherein no kind word was ever spoken, where love never came, where brutal vice and squalid misery dwelt continually, where the brothers and sisters were enemies, whose only bond of union was their dread and hatred of their parents. The last were dead now, which was one comfort, he thought, smiling grimly.

And now, what had come to him? he asked himself. Was it only the weakness, not yet overcome, that had followed his illness? Was it that that made him turn from his mates, from everything which he had valued and striven for before, in spite of his efforts to be his old self? And why was that face always before him? What was she to him, or he to her—he did not even know her name—only knew that she was a lady and—and——

Or was it not his illness, after all? Could it be true, what he had heard from the parsons and many others who had formed food for jest and scoff of his again and again, about God, and virtue, and right—names whose meaning he only dimly guessed? Was it true, after all, what they said about the happiness of honesty and manliness, after the joy and honour that could be won and worn in the face of day? It might be, and if it was, could he not try it?

His heart throbbed heavily at the thought, and in his soul something seemed to throb and stir. Half-aloud he asked himself again, could he not try—but how?

His face worked convulsively, he put it down on his crossed arms, one sob, heavy and hoarse, shook him from head to foot, and he lay still.

The sun had long set, and the stars were beginning to sparkle overhead, when he arose. In the west the last fires of day were fading. Seen by the dim light his face looked even more than usually repulsive. His teeth were hard set, and the old scowl had deepened. He stood so for some time, and then turned to begin his homeward journey.

* * * * *

"Forward the escape men! quick with it!" and into the glare of the burning buildings the stalwart firemen rushed the life-saving engine, and prepared to raise it

against the wall of the house, while hoarse cries of encouragement rose from the surging crowd.

From roof to basement the upper end of Brisbane Terrace was in flames, all except the highest storey of the last house. From every window rolled columns of smoke, in which the gathering tongues and flashes of fire played like lightning. Over that portion of the terrace in which the conflagration had originated the roof had fallen in, and the flames towered and roared into the midnight sky, lighting up the adjacent buildings and the vast crowd as with the glow of noonday. Against the glare the forms of the firemen loomed like silhouettes as they strove to gain point after point from which they could fight their giant enemy.

At a window of the upper storey of the house at the extreme end of the terrace appeared the figure of a woman. In the lurid light of the flames her face and form were clearly discernible. Amid the thickening smoke she leant forward, her clasped hands extended to those below in mute supplication. In the cleared space beneath a man was struggling in the grasp of two stalwart constables, who held him back from rushing on certain death.

"Let me go!" he cried, striving furiously to free himself. "She is my daughter. Let me go, I say!"

"You can't help her, sir. Here's the escape, thank Heaven! She's safe yet, sir," and the man's voice betrayed the extent of his relief.

Amid deafening cheers from the crowd the machine was swung towards the window.

A fierce rush of flame darted forth from a portion of the sinking roof. It crashed inwards, striking in its descent the weakened outer wall, already tottering. There was a loud cry of horror and warning, a tremendous crash as the mass fell bodily, hurling the escape to the ground in ruins, and narrowly missing several of the firemen.

There was an instant of dead silence, and then arose a wild tumult of terror and agony, the frantic shrieks of women mingling with the hoarser cries of men. The weak fainted, the strong averted their faces and wrung their hands in shuddering horror.

Fighting desperately, the miserable father strove like a madman to free himself, while his agonised cries went to the very hearts of those who heard them.

Suddenly a single voice was raised in a cheer, almost frantic in its excitement. All eyes were upturned, and then a shout—such a shout as only comes from hearts stirred to the core—arose from the crowd.

Clinging like a cat to the ornamental escape-pipe that ran up the corner of the building, was the figure of a man. His arms and feet were bare, and round his waist he carried a coil of rope. Although in the confusion following the destruction of the fire-escape he had gained two-thirds of the distance unnoticed, it seemed almost impossible that he could gain the roof. The pipe was encircled with wreathes, with bosses between, but they afforded slight hold, and the severity of the strain seemed too great for mortal strength to endure.

Up, up, unresting, unwavering, he crept. His naked hands and feet were red with blood, his hair and clothing were scorched, and the rope was smouldering in places. Billows of smoke rolled past, hiding him at times from sight, fiery tongues darted at him, sparks fell in blistering showers over him, all unheeded. His upturned face was white and set, his eyes fixed on the summit of his perilous ascent.

He was within a foot of the roof. A great silence fell on the crowd. Would he do it? In the quivering limbs and convulsive gasps that shook his frame they read his desperation and agony.

An instant of shuddering doubt, and then like a thunderclap rose the exultant shout of those below, as, with a last desperate effort, he swung upwards and stood on the roof, with his face turned full to the crowd. It was the rough.

With swift hands he fastened the rope to the twisted gutter channel, and lowered himself to the window. The woman had disappeared. As he vanished among the smoke now pouring from it, a tall, spare man rushed into the clear space below, and cried in a voice like a trumpet:

"Quick, quick! The roof's fallin', mate!"

He reappeared, bearing in his arms a limp, motionless figure wrapped in a blanket. Amid exultant shouts, he secured the rope round it, and, bracing himself firmly against the ledge, lowered it swiftly to where, unheeding the blistering heat, the father stood, with upraised arms, sobbing out prayers and blessings.

The rope was instantly cut from the rescued figure, and again the voice of the tall man was heard.

"Quick, mate! For your life—quick!"

An outburst of flame from the window below him, and he saw the rope part and fall. He was lost.

He raised himself quietly and folded his arms. He heard confusedly the wild outcry that rose from the distracted sea of human beings beneath; saw women and men covering their faces; heard and saw them as if afar off; for in his soul shone a light that made him forget all else.

He knew now the meaning of his trouble. He had loved her and he had saved her—the nearness of death had made all clear. He had saved her, and that was enough for him. Standing there glorified in the light of his self-sacrifice, purified by the fire of his martyrdom, the ignorant, rough, gaol-bird was true man at last.

The roof bent, the flame came nearer. The tall man below cried, "Good-bye, mate; good-bye."

He heard and waved his hand in answer. A crash, a rush of blinding flame, and he was gone.

It was better so. He was fittest for death just then.

LE FRERE.

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GANGARO'S REVENGE.

THE gaunt figure of a cowled monk stood in the doorway of the Marquis de Silva's tent in the French camp near Zaragossa, and calmly faced the grandee of Spain, who had sold his sword to the enemies of his country in the troublous times of 1808.

"What is your errand?" asked the Marquis curtly.

The monk began in measured tones: "You are thirty years old to-day; you are a colonel in the pay of Joseph Bonaparte, the French usurper; your father left you vast estates and you have run through two fortunes; your only hope is in your sword, and yet you are ambitious."

"You have taken a good deal of trouble to tell me what I already know full well," sneered the Marquis.

"I tell you this to prove that I know you, as you know yourself. You may win honours in the field, but you want wealth, and seek to marry an heiress," continued the monk deliberately.

The Marquis started, and looked somewhat uneasily at the speaker. Then he replied with studied indifference: "And what of that? There are plenty of heiresses in Spain, thank Heaven!"

"The one *you* want is in Zaragossa, and is betrothed to your comrade in arms, Count Armand de Tréville," whispered the monk, coming nearer to him. "Listen, señor! There is one man who can help you, and is willing to do so; but he must first know what you will do for him in return."

"I will give him what he asks."

"On your honour as a gentleman?"

"I promise," said de Silva.

"Then your will shall be done," answered his mysterious visitor, casting a furtive glance round to see that they were unperceived, before he quickly threw back the cowl and displayed the familiar features of Gangaro, the Marquis's former tutor.

De Silva uttered an exclamation of surprise, but the monk motioned him to keep silence, and went on quickly: "I am tired of monastic life, with its petty squabbles and dull routine, so if I help you to wealth, you must give me a wider field for my energies, a more exciting career. To the world I shall be your secretary, in reality I shall be your confidante and secret agent. You have fixed your choice on Donna Juana de Moncada, one of the richest heiresses of Spain. She shall be your wife before two days have passed. But we must not be seen together," he said, drawing down his cowl again, and in another moment he had stolen out into the darkness.

Juana de Moncada was the daughter of one of the proudest houses in the Peninsula, and had been left an orphan a few weeks previously, when her father had fallen trying to rid his country from the grasp of the tyrant who claimed all Europe as his own. She had been rescued and protected by a chivalrous young French noble, Count Armand de Tréville, and, in spite of his nationality, she had learnt to return his love. During the siege of Zaragossa she had found shelter with a fruit seller, an old servant of her father's, and had passed as his niece; but now the city had fallen, and Armand was ordered away with his regiment.

In the hope of ensuring her safety from molestation he had prevailed upon Juana to become his wife before he left, and after much hesitation she had consented, knowing that her confessor, a man whom she trusted blindly, would perform the ceremony for them.

The morning after his interview with Don Garcias de Silva, Gangaro paid a visit to M. de Rouvigny, a powerful French official who had just arrived in Zaragossa. After a due display of cringing deferences, he informed the exalted personage that his nephew, Count Armand de Tréville was about to contract a clandestine marriage with the niece of a tradesman in the city.

"But how come you to know this?" asked M. de Rouvigny angrily.

"The girl is one of my penitents, and I was asked to perform the ceremony to-night. She is both good and beautiful; but not the wife for your Excellency's nephew."

"Quite so, I understand. You are a man of honour and sense. I will prevent it at all costs."

That night Count Armand was dispatched to Paris,

nominally on an important mission, but virtually he was placed under arrest till he should be out of harm's way.

Donna Juana kept her tryst at the little church of Santa Térésa and plighted her troth in the semi-darkness to the muffled figure at her side. As they left the porch a carriage dashed past. There was a man's pale, strained face pressed against the window, and he raised his hands as if imploring for help; but the driver lashed up his horses, and in a moment only the echo of the clattering hoofs broke the silence.

Juana felt a thrill of undefined terror, and clung more closely to her bridegroom's arm; but a strange voice fell upon her ear, and when she sought his eyes her heart seemed to turn as cold as ice within her, for it was the proud, cruel face of the Marquis de Silva that bent over her, not the beloved features of Armand de Tréville.

Five years later Don Garcias de Silva had climbed as high as the hand of Joseph Bonaparte could raise him. He had squandered the greater part of his wife's fortune and was preparing a double way of escape for himself, when the star of the Bonapartes should have set. He was at the head of a band of Spaniards who thought to raise a successful revolt in Madrid, and should that fail, as he feared it might, he had resolved to sell his sword to the victorious Wellington, whom the wisest of his countrymen had already hailed as the only bulwark against the oppressor.

The conspirators had just dispersed after an enthusiastic meeting at his palace; José, their trusty messenger, had been dispatched on an important mission with letters to Salamanca, and everything seemed to be working smoothly; but he had forgotten to reckon with Gangaro, the man who had saved him from ruin, who had pronounced the sacrilegious blessing on his marriage, and who had sold his own sacred office for the glitter of worldly advantages.

De Silva had not confided his far-reaching schemes to Gangaro of late, he would gladly have shaken off the sullied hand that he had once grasped so readily; but Gangaro thought differently.

The morning after the conspirators' meeting he entered his master's room as usual and began to tell him the news.

"They say there is a dangerous conspiracy in Madrid."

"They've been saying that for the last six months," laughed the Marquis.

"But now they can even name the leader—no less a person than yourself, monseigneur!"

De Silva dropped his eyes for a second before Gangaro's piercing gaze, but a moment later he went on with a short, hard laugh:

"That is news indeed! What else do they say?"

"That a special envoy has been dispatched by the French government to investigate the plot which is known to have its headquarters here in Madrid, and that short shrift will be given to all concerned."

"And do you know the name of this envoy extraordinary?"

"Count Armand de Tréville," replied Gangaro with malicious emphasis.

The Marquis uttered a smothered oath and the secretary went on quietly:

"He is endowed with absolute power of life and death; but no doubt you will hear it all from himself. His first visit is sure to be to his former comrade in arms."

"Yes, of course," answered Don Garcias shifting uneasily in his seat. "But these futile attempts at revolt are beneath my notice. I have far weightier matters to engross my attention," he added with his usual *hauteur*.

Gangaro bowed low and withdrew. A satisfied smile lit up his face with an evil light when he had closed the door behind him.

"He still refuses to confide in me," he said to himself, "but I have frightened him. He is too daring to be long influenced by fear, so I must have proofs."

He went into the garden and carefully examined the state of the paths, still moist from the rain of the preceding day, and under the windows of a disused wing of the palace he saw the marks of many feet and traced them to the ivy-covered postern gate in the outside wall.

More moved by the news than he cared to admit, De Silva's busy brain set to work to counteract this unpleasant turn of events. He knew that Count Armand had no suspicion of the treachery he had employed to steal Juana, but any revelation of the same might prove a fatal bar to his escape to the English lines. He went to his wife's apartments, where Donna Juana received him with her usual chilling courtesy. Her beautiful face told the story of her loveless, hated marriage, which only the consolations of religion and the heroism of her race had enabled her to endure.

"You seem sad, Madame?" he began mockingly. "It is well that I am the bearer of news that will cheer you. In three days is the anniversary of our wedding day, and I propose to give a brilliant fête in honour of the occasion."

"There is little cause for rejoicing," said Donna Juana wearily.

The Marquis winced, for he had loved her in his own savage way, and her continued aversion to him was a deep source of mortification.

"You were ever cruel," he said bitterly. "But the fête will take place by my orders, and it is my desire that you shall wear your richest gems and costliest robes, for you will have to open the ball with our former mutual acquaintance, Count Armand de Tréville."

Juana caught at the arm of the carved chair beside her at the sound of her lost lover's name, and her husband watched her struggle for self-command with cruel satisfaction.

"Your orders shall be obeyed," she said in a toneless voice, and as soon as he had left her with mocking courtesy, she sank down before her *prie-dieu*, her mind racked with rage and humiliation, and tortured by a hope that she dare not cherish.

After finding the footsteps in the palace garden, Gangaro had been stealthily following up the clue, though his cunning enabled him to conceal the workings of his mind from the Marquis. The night before the ball José returned with a sealed packet for his master, and Gangaro met him at the postern gate.

"Give me the papers, monseigneur is waiting impatiently," he said.

"But do *you* know——?" faltered José.

"Of course, you insolent rogue! I am in his Excellency's full confidence. There is no time to be lost!"

For a moment José wavered, his hand sought the packet, and then his master's solemn warning came back to him, and he replied firmly:

"Then lead me to monseigneur. I can go as quickly as you."

Gangaro seized him by the arm and dragged him into the deep shadows, then there was a push, a blow, a

muffled scream, and José lay dead—stabbed through the heart, while Gangaro hurried from the spot with the proofs of his master's complicity in the plot.

The ball was a brilliant success. The mass of gaily attired guests seemed to have forgotten alike their own and their country's woes in the spirit of revelry and rejoicing. The Marquis de Silva was still feverishly awaiting José's return, and every hour's delay was making his position more desperate. Juana and Armand had met at the opening of the gorgeous fête, and their eyes had told that their love still lived despite the dense cloud of misapprehension that had parted them. De Silva seemed to take pains to throw them together.

"Armand, why did you forsake me?" Juana asked passionately, when they were alone later in the evening.

"Why were you false to me, Juana? I recognised you leaving the church," was his reproachful answer.

"False! Ah, Holy Virgin!" she exclaimed with a sob, and then she told him how she had been duped, and he knew for the first time how his former comrade had stolen his bride from him. His rage against de Silva knew no bounds; but she checked him with the words:

"Remember, he is my husband!"

At that moment the Marquis appeared in the doorway of the ante-room, and Armand went towards him, saying as he passed:

"Now I know all, we will settle it to-morrow."

As he spoke, a French officer bearing a warrant entered the salon, unannounced, and behind, in the corridor gleamed the swords of the Royal guard. He marched direct to Don Garcias de Silva, saying:

"In the name of the King, your sword, monsieur!"

The Marquis hesitated for a moment. Resistance and flight were equally impossible. Then he turned to M. de Tréville and said:

"I swear on my honour as a gentleman not to escape, but give me a moment alone."

Armand signed to the officer to leave them, and simultaneously the brilliant throng dispersed as if by magic.

"Did you order my arrest, monsieur?"

"No, I don't understand——" answered Armand.

"Ah, then José is not coming back! I begin to understand," said the Marquis, turning a trifle paler.

"You are right, monseigneur," hissed Gangaro, who had drawn near; "you would have shaken me off and left me in the lurch, so I took steps to place you in safe keeping."

Don Garcias hardly vouchsafed to look at the speaker, but turned to his wife and placed her hand in that of Count Armand, saying:

"I parted you, the least I can do is to re-unite you."

Then he raised his head proudly and spoke again:

"A de Silva does not perish like a common criminal, he dies of his own free will; but before he dies, he punishes."

And before those standing round realised what he was doing, he had drawn two pistols from his pockets and fired. One ball pierced the heart of Gangaro the traitor, the other penetrated his own brain. The officer rushed back into the room as the two bodies fell heavily to the ground, and Armand gently led the half-fainting Juana from the terrible scene, saying:

"Come, my dear one. The Marquise de Tréville, my mother, is awaiting us in Paris." Helen Thör.

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.. From Prairie and Backwoods. ..

IV.—THE BRAND OF THE DOUBLE "O."

MOST of the men on the farm were in love with Baker's daughter. She was a good looking girl, for sure, for her hair was extremely black and yet no blacker than her eyes, and her cheeks glowed like the sides of a scarlet berry in the sunshine. There was mischief in those eyes, bless 'em, and it is only for love of them that I do not count up on my fingers how many men are dead to-day because of those dimples in her cheeks.

It was more her manners than anything else which had me stampeding with the other men and mixed up in the family feud. I'm not saying it against her, because she was a lady through and through, but she was just like one of the boys among us. She would smoke her cigarette, you know, and mix the cock-tails, and look after herself in surprising fashion. One day at a dance, before you knew, she had out her pocket gun and was blazing away at Joe Carter's feet. You never saw a clear space made so quickly in your life. "The clumsy wretch trod on my toe," she said. Next moment she was apologising to me in that pretty way of hers for interrupting our waltz.

However, a few days later a little matter rose between us. I had gone down to the depôt for a load of hay, and it turned out to be about the biggest load that two horses ever had to pull. We weren't half way back when one of them gave out. I stopped at Carter's place and unhitched there to rest the beasts, and on entering the barn I saw that someone else from the farm was around, because there was Baker's white mare lazily munching at a big pile of grass. I guessed in a moment it was Rose, who no doubt had come down to Mrs. Carter's meeting; but I chose to think otherwise.

She was sitting by herself in the porch, and I went up and leant on the railing and asked whether she had come to inquire how Joe was after the dance. It was a stupid question to ask, because she had missed him with every shot and the fact rankled with her. But it is not till a man begins to have grey hair that he learns you must never chaff a woman.

"Now, how is that man with the cloven foot?" I asked.

"It's not my fault if his foot's not cloven," she answered, thrusting out her pretty chin which was always a sign of anger. "Joe's a big man, to be sure, or the man I was dancing with might have had the nerve to see that he did not go unpunished."

"As for that," I said carelessly, "I'll put the mark of the beast on Joe Carter whenever it pleases you to see him punished for daring to tread on your toe."

"It's easy to talk," she said, poking out her chin still farther.

"Not when a man's with *you*, Rose," I answered, "because your beauty holds him spell-bound. But I've given two things to you, my word and my heart, and if you'll keep the one I'll keep the other."

"Oh, as for your heart!" she said. But she was not altogether displeased, for she was fully as fond of attention as any girl in the Southern states of America.

I asked her what she was doing there, because in view of her relations with Joe.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him," she said. "I'm here looking for trouble. Besides there was to have been a sewing class, but perhaps it's postponed as there is no one about."

As this seemed probable I proceeded to make myself comfortable in the chair beside hers. It was the first opportunity that had come my way for a long while to be alone with her, and I endeavoured to make the most of it, especially in view of the dethronement of Joe, who had been the favourite until he had proved himself so clumsy a dancer. But it was now my turn to be clumsy, and though she was pleased to encourage my attentions, I felt rather like a mouse in the claws of a cat, an exquisite cat, a sweet cat, a lovable cat—but with claws.

Yet if I lacked skill and wanted confidence, I seemed to be making not so bad an impression after all. Finally, when she declared it was time for us to be starting for the farm I even stole a kiss unrebuked. No one else on the farm had ever kissed Rose, and I could scarcely credit my good fortune. From that moment the world went round the other way with me. However, girls are most changeable at times, and Rose was the worst girl that way I have ever known.

When it came to putting the horses back in the waggon I found the black was still played out. He would never be able to stand that journey in front of such a load. So I suggested to Rose that I should hitch up the white mare, and put her saddle on the tired beast.

Would she let me?

Well, would she?

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The world got going round the usual way in a minute.

It was a lucky thing for me that she hadn't got her revolver on her at that moment. But business is business, and I had to get that load of hay up to the farm. Moreover you must never let a woman have her head. Without entering into an argument, therefore, I hitched up the white horse and put Rose's saddle on the black.

"Are you coming along?" I asked.

"No!"

"Why? That black horse is perfectly good for riding," I said taking the reins and climbing up on the hay.

She stood leaning against the barn door biting her pretty lips.

"I love you just the same, Rose," I explained. "I've got to get this load of hay home, and you know well enough that I am going about it the best way. It's quite time you learnt to give way sometimes, darling."

Her only answer was to make a hole in the ground with her heel.

I don't mind confessing that for a moment I hesitated. I even contemplated climbing down from my perch and changing horses again. But, on the other hand, man was made the master, and it is none of his business to let girls get the better of him.

"Well, I am going, Rose," I said. "I've enjoyed this afternoon, and I call it real mean of you to spoil it by pretending to be angry just because I want to borrow your horse."

"You'll be sorry for this," she said, still leaning against the barn.

"The only thing I'm sorry about, darling," I said, "is that we are not going to spend the rest of the afternoon together. It's breaking my heart to leave you."

She was a very angry woman when I left her standing there. But how silly of her to make such a fuss about riding a tired horse. There is a sort of pride about some girls which makes them want to have their own way. I don't understand it, and I don't approve of it. I might have stood there arguing all the afternoon about the necessity of my having her horse and she would not have yielded. Besides, I would make it all right with her when she came home in the evening. What a pretty girl she was to be sure!

However she had not a pretty temper. She did not show up at all that night. The next morning I was out with the other boys branding the cattle when Joe Carter came along on that wall-eyed mare of his. He hitched her to the rail and strode over to where I was working.

"Morning," I said.

"Morning. Look here, young fellow," said he, "what do you mean by insulting Rose down at our place, yesterday." His cheek-bones were working ominously under his dusky skin. "That kind of thing is not allowed down at our place," he said.

It was really preposterous that this fellow, whom Rose had commissioned me to punish, should put on a blustering air of that kind.

"I am glad you mentioned Miss Rose's name," said I, "because, now I think of it, I promised to finish the work she began the other night, and split your toes like those of a steer."

It is seldom I speak too quickly, but I did on that occasion, for the words were not out of my mouth before I realised that my revolver was in my coat, and my coat on the fence.

But my branding iron with the double "O" mark was in my hand, and just properly hot, and before he had time to draw his gun I had planted it full and square on his forehead.

Some steers make no noise under the iron, and others yell and moan as if their tails had been wrenched right out in the twisting, but a whole herd of them together could not have made the noise that Joe Carter did when the hot iron bit into his flesh. Moreover, thinking I might brand him in another part, he took to his heels and fled.

Now there was one thing I was glad about. I had put myself straight with Rose, and I had put an end to Joe's chance once and for all. I should not hear any more impertinence from him, and he would go about for the rest of his days with the mark of the beast on his forehead.

However, Rose was in no haste to express her gratitude. I really believe that for the moment my little masterliness with her in choosing which horse she should ride and which I should drive, annoyed her more than all Joe's clumsiness.

Five days later she spoke to me for the first time since that delightful afternoon when I won her love and gave her mine in exchange.

She was riding her white horse, and she came to where I was working in the orchard and sat idly watching me for a while. Then she said:

"I'm going to get married."

"Oh!"

"I'm going to marry Joe Carter."

"Ah!"

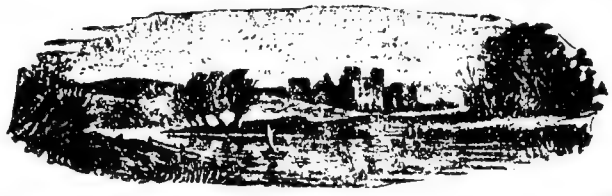
"He's marked like the rest of father's property," she said, "and that settles it."

"Ah!"

"You didn't think of that, did you?" she went on sweetly. "Well, now, I'll give you a piece of womanly advice. You do more thinking in future. Think before you make a woman ride home on your worn-out horses, and think before you make up your mind to stay in this part of the country, because next time Joe sets eyes on you he will shoot you. That's my advice. Good-bye!"

It was because I did not take her advice that I lost my arm, but I had the satisfaction of shooting Joe in the leg and giving him a cloven foot after all.

This may seem a wild kind of courtship to you, but it's a history of any day in the Southern States, and the feud between Joe's family and mine is not at all exceptional. Only it's not every man that has the brand of the double "O" on his forehead, and when you see one marked like that you may know that he belongs to Rose.



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Cleans and burnishes gold, silver, plate, copper, brass, nickel, tin, glass, etc., better, quicker, and at less cost of labour and money than any other polish known.
Paste or tablets, 1d. to 6d. All dealers.

DON'T LET MOTHS RUIN YOUR FURS OR BLANKETS
KEATING'S POWDER PRESERVES THEM.
KILLS BLACKBEETLES & FLEAS
Tins 3d., 6d. & 1/-

100 PACKETS showy Flower Seeds, 1/6; unequalled anywhere.
DANIEL STONE, LOUDWATER, BUCKS.

A SUM of from 12s. to 25s. per week can be earned in spare hours or evenings by either sex everywhere.—Send addressed envelope for particulars to Box 24, Eclipse Works, 92A Aldersgate Street, London.

5S. 11D. CYCLING SKIRTS. USUALLY 7s. 11d.
Postage 6d. extra. Black or Navy Serge Cloth, all sizes, lined linenette, divided back, buttoned tabs, elastic stirrups. If saddle-gored, 7s. 11d. KNICKERS 2s. 11d.
THE NEW COAT, from 7s. 6d., made to measure.
THE NEW SKIRT, Sheath Circular from 7s. 6d.; perfect fitting hips. Patterns and illustration free.
James Murgatroyd & Co., Grove Terrace, Bradford.

FOR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.
JUNO CYCLES
ARE THE VERY BEST AND MOST UP-TO-DATE.
Carriage Paid. Cash Discount.
Write for New Season's List.
JUNO Cycles and Accessories sent Post Free.
LISTS POST FREE
Juno No. 4, £10 10s. 17/6 monthly.

Monthly		Monthly		Monthly
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£10 10s. ... 17/6	£12 12s. ... 21/-	£15 15s. ... 26/3

METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS' CO, Ltd.,
Juno Cycle School & Works, 75, 76, Bishopsgate Street, Without, E.C., and Piccadilly Circus, London, W.
Typewriters, £9 9s. 15s. 9d. Monthly.

ZOX
CURES
NEURALGIA
Toothache, Headache, Sciatica, and all Nerve Pains.
PURE, HARMLESS, AND NON-APERIENT.
Do not be persuaded to take a substitute, there is nothing as good as ZOX.
Of all Chemists, 1s. and 2s. 6d. per Box.
ZOX Co., 11 Hatton Garden, E.C.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work. 39/-
THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO.,
188B High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.;
63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

ALL FAT PEOPLE
can safely Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently by taking TRILENE TABLETS (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."
Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE CO., Sole Proprietors 66 Finsbury Pavement, London.
SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.
Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Walnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 14 stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 24lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

SULPHOLINE LOTION,
For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.
SHILLING BOTTLES.

PIANOS. UPRIGHT IRON GRAND.
Complete Iron frame, Brass Pin Plate, Nickel-bolted Wrest Plank, Check Action, Full Trichord, Full Compass, Rivetted Hammers, Handsome Walnut Case, Inlaid Marqueterie Panel, Sconces, Trusses, etc. Tone and touch perfect. Guaranteed 25 years. 28 guineas, at 10/6 per month. Delivered free on payment of 10/6. Approval. Catalogues Free.

ORGANS. CENUINE AMERICAN.
Imported Direct. Solid Walnut Case, Mirror Top, Music Case, 2 Knee Swells, Mouse and Dust Proof, 8 Stops, 3 Sets of Reeds, 14 Guineas, at 6/- per month. 10 Stops, 3 Sets of Reeds, 2 Octave Couplers. 15 guineas, at 7/- per month. Illustrated Lists Free. Kindly mention this paper.
THE LONDON AND LIVERPOOL PIANOFORTE CO.,
Granby St. & Selborne St., LIVERPOOL.
Agents wanted where not represented.

P&S ZAIROID CORSETS

Beautiful creations for the new century, brightening up also the remaining months of the old. No daintier or more delightful goods ever made than the P. & S. They stand apart from the corset crowd. They are the latest triumph of the corset-makers' art, and are winning golden opinions everywhere. Perfection of shape. High-grade materials. Expert workmanship. Economic prices. Rustless Zairoid replaces steel in busks and supports. Think what all this means!
If this interests you, send to us for our new Booklet and Price List. Nothing to pay, not even postage. You can then obtain from your Draper when you are ready.
W. PRETTY & SON, IPSWICH.

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IN FRIENDLY CONVERSE.

Brown wishes to know if I can tell him which is the British business for the carrying on of which the largest working capital is required.————I should say the London and North-Western Railway with its enormous plant and rolling stock.

Fly.—Naturalists say that a single swallow will devour 6,000 flies in a day.

Observant asks why coachmen and footmen sometimes have cockades at the side of their tall hats and sometimes do not.————Because some employers of coachmen and footmen fancy themselves rather more distinguished than others, and take this means of letting the world at large know the estimate they put upon their own importance.

S. T.—Oh, no! If there were but one potato in the world, a careful cultivator might produce 10,000,000,000 from it and its offspring in ten years, and that would supply the world with seed again.

M. D. R.—It is calculated that by the time it is thoroughly fit for service each horse purchased for the Army costs about £55. The actual price paid for remounts for the cavalry is not supposed to exceed £33 apiece, but the horses, of course, have to be trained after they are bought.

Skin.—The skin of the so-called blue fox, whose beautiful fur is almost worth its weight in gold. Polish ladies greatly admire this fur, and dream of possessing it as a part of their wedding outfit; but no one can form an adequate idea of the true beauty of this animal who has not seen him on the Siberian steppes. Not many Siberians can boast of having enjoyed the sight, as this creature is very scarce, very timid, and by far more wary and cunning than any other of his species.

J. N. S.—Two-thirds of the total number of children under ten years of age in the United Kingdom are insured in one form or another.

Pressure.—Eggs could be thrown into the air and allowed to fall on turf without breaking. Another peculiarity of an ordinary egg (unboiled) is its power of resisting a crushing strain. It may interest you to try the experiment of placing an egg *endways* between the palms, then interlace the fingers and squeeze as hard as they can, as one would squeeze a lemon. You will probably get tired before the egg does. But place the egg sideways between the palms, and it is easily broken. Of course, the egg must be a sound one.

Top.—Yes, some of the tops with which the Chinese amuse themselves are as large as barrels. It takes three men to spin one, and it gives off a sound that can be heard several hundred yards away.

Jack.—Observations upon flint scrapers found in various parts of Europe has led to the belief among experts that the proportion of left-handed persons was much greater in pre-historic times than at present. Out of 354 neolithic scrapers which were examined, it was determined that 105 were used by the right hand and 197 by the left; the remaining fifty-two were not marked so clearly that it could be determined by which hand they were used, or they may have been used by either indifferently.

Bike.—It is a misdemeanour to throw upon any road in New York State, glass, tacks, or any sharp substance likely to injure bicycle tyres.

Sale.—Anciently, in many parts of France, when a sale of land took place, it was the custom to have twelve adult witnesses accompanied by twelve little boys; and when the price of the land was paid, and its surrender took place, the ears of the boys were pulled, and they were beaten severely, so that the pain thus inflicted should make an impression upon their memory, and, if required afterwards, they might bear witness to the sale.

W. K.—What you describe as a novelty in advertising (viz., putting an advertisement slip in a pocket in railway tickets) is not new, and you do the French an injustice in giving the credit of it to the Italians, as I know, from travelling in France, that this form of advertising has been in vogue for some considerable time on some, if not all, the French railways.

S. C.—The Glasgow Savings Bank has the credit of being the largest in the United Kingdom.

J. G.—An easy way to reckon the pressure of the atmosphere at any particular spot is to remember that it comes to very nearly a ton for every square foot of surface. The weight of the entire atmosphere in tons is expressed by sixteen figures, of which the first three are 524 and the rest noughts.

Actor.—Dramatists in France get twelve per cent. of the gross receipts of each play, and are allowed tickets to the value of one hundred francs for every performance of such plays as they have written.

J. M.—Half-a-million persons, it is stated, are, in one way or another, employed on the Sabbath in connection with the drink traffic, and 200,000 of these are young women.

P. L.—No, the sponge is an animal. Authorities agree in putting it in the lowest scale of animal life.

Equine.—Nearly 20,000 horses are imported into this country every year.

Geo.—At Hirniskretschen, in Bohemia, from the unequal working of nature in the destruction of rocks, has resulted a most colossal and ruggedly beautiful arch, the summit of which is upwards of 1,400 feet above sea level. The sides and top together appear at a distance like the frame of an immense picture, the latter being represented by the wildly romantic scenery which is visible through the opening of the arch.

G. M. R.—Probably not more than one person in every 200 in this country knows a foreign language. About seventy per cent. of the population belong to the working classes, among whom a knowledge of a foreign language is very exceptional. The majority of the middle and upper classes get a smattering of some foreign tongue while at school, but it is not often that this results in real knowledge of the language.

Just a few words to remind my readers that the Fresh Air Fund list is open. Although the subscriptions come to £20 this week, a very large amount of money is yet wanted before we can carry out our programme for the summer. So far, I am afraid that *Short Stories* readers have not contributed their proper share towards the total sum subscribed, and I feel sure that it is only necessary to remind them that ninepence pays for a whole day's happiness for a child to find donations rolling into this office. If any of you would like to have a collecting form, one will be sent along on receipt of a post-card.

SHORT STORIES' ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0	10	0
Double ,, ,, ,,	1	0	0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10	0	0
Half-page ,, ,, ,, ...	5	0	0
Quarter-page ,, ,, ...	2	10	0
Eighth-page ,, ,, ...	1	5	0
Front page, whole ,, ,, ...	12	10	0
,, half	6	5	0

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, April **25th**, if intended for the Issue on sale May **9th**, and dated May **13th**. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed and Published by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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HOLLOWAY'S

PILLS AND OINTMENT

HAVE HELD FRONT RANK FOR SIXTY YEARS AS

THE BEST FAMILY MEDICINES.

The Pills are especially recommended for the use of females. They cure Headache, Indigestion, Biliousness, Heartburn, Palpitation, Nervousness and Giddy Sensations.

The Ointment cures all Skin Diseases, Stiff Joints, Sores, Old Wounds, Piles, Fistulas, Asthma, Bronchitis, and Influenza,

Manufactured only at 78 NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON. *Sold by all Chemists.*
Advice gratis, daily (Saturdays excepted), between 11 and 4, or by letter.

CONSUMPTION.

Particulars of, and treatment for a **SUCCESSFUL** and speedy **CURE** for this disease can be obtained by sending stamped addressed envelope to "M," 6 Selwyn Avenue, Richmond, Surrey. This advertisement is genuine and is not connected with any other under the same heading.

A Magnificent Complexion Assured

BY THE FREE USE OF

LILLIE POWDER.

Its subtle MEDICINAL PROPERTIES Nourish, Heal and Soothe the delicate nerves of the skin, and bring Health and Beauty to all. Unsurpassed for all ailments of the skin. See testimonials.

Prepared from the original recipe invented by Mrs. Langtry, under the strict supervision of Her Majesty's Perruquier, Mr. W. Clarkson.

Order it of your Chemist, and be sure and refuse all substitutes, as they may be injurious. SEND FOR IT AT ONCE as you value the health of your skin.

THREE TINTS: White, Flesh-colour, & Cream.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

COFFEE WITHOUT DREGS.

GOOD! ITS MASON'S

An agreeable, stimulating and sustaining beverage. Instantly prepared and most economical. Equal to the very finest coffee. Highly recommended by the Medical Profession.

Of all Grocers and Stores, or a Sample Bottle post free for 9 stamps.

ALSO TRY

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES

AND

MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS.

Sample Bottle of either sent free for 9d.; two assorted 1/3 three assorted 1/8.

Agents Wanted.

Manufacturers—

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

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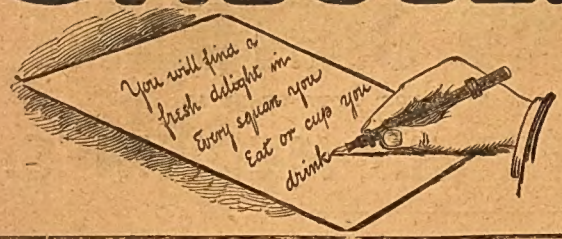
CHOCOLAT KOHLER

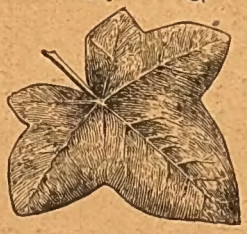
OF UNCHALLENGED PURITY.

Perfect in Flavour and Quality.



(LAUSANNE SWITZERLAND)

James Pascall Ltd., London. Sole Agents to the Trade.



The Finest Best Purest

PRICE 3D. PER LARGE DOUBLE TABLET

"Ivy" Soap

Its remarkable property of Floating on Water prevents the annoyance of losing the soap, as it is always in sight - ready when wanted.

To be had of all Grocers, Stores, etc.

If any difficulty, Three Cakes will be sent Carriage Paid, on receipt of Address & Twelve Stamps or One Shilling Postal Order.

BY

IT FLOATS

GOODWINS' SOLE MAKERS 371 Ordsall Lane MANCHESTER.

WASHES EVERYTHING

TO BE HAD OF ALL GROCERS &C.

MANUFACTORY: DUKINFIELD, MANCHESTER.

SCRIVEN

'DOLLY' BLUE

Notice.—"**DOLLY**" **Blue** is neatly tied in a white bag to a small handle to hold by whilst using. It is the cheapest and best Laundry Blue in the market. "Dolly" Blue is sold by all Grocers and Oilmen at ½d. per bag.

☞ **IMPORTANT.**—The public are cautioned against attempts which may be made to supply other Blue, Tints, and Dyes than those of Messrs. W. Edge and Sons Ltd., when "Dolly" Blue, "Dolly" Tints, and "Dolly" Dyes are ordered.

The Dolly Specialities are manufactured by

W. EDGE & SONS LIMITED, BOLTON, LANCS.

IT IS NOT

Reckitt's PARIS BLUE

UNLESS RECKITT'S NAME IS ON THE WRAPPER.